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REFLECTIONS

ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE

FEMALE SEX.

BRITISH MUSEUM

REFLECTIONS

ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE

FEMALE SEX;

WITH

SUGGESTIONS FOR ITS IMPROVEMENT.

BY

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BRITISH MUSEUM

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REFLECTIONS

ON THE PRESENT CONDITION OF THE

FEMALE SEX.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory observations, shewing the claim which Society has on Women to employ their time usefully; pointing out the characteristic perfection of the mental qualifications of both Sexes, and the necessity which there is for the talents of Women being directed towards procuring an independent support; with an attempt to mark the line which bounds their exertions.

IT is asserted by Doctor Adam Smith, that every individual is a burthen upon the society to which he belongs, who does not contribute his share of productive labour for the good of the whole. The Doctor,

when he lays down this principle, ſpeaks in general terms of man, as a being capable of forming a ſocial compact for mutual defence, and the advantage of the community at large. He does not abſolutely ſpecify, that both ſexes, in order to render themſelves beneficial members of ſociety, are equally required to comply with theſe terms; but ſince the female ſex is included in the idea of the ſpecies, and as women poſſeſs the ſame qualities as men, though perhaps in a different degree, their ſex cannot free them from the claim of the public for their proportion of uſefulneſs. That the major part of the ſex, eſpecially of thoſe among the higher orders, neglect to fulfil this important obligation, is a fact that muſt be admitted, and points out the propriety

priety of an enquiry into the cauſes of their deficiency.

The indolent indulgence and trifling purſuits in which thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of gentlewomen, often paſs their lives, may be attributed, with greater probability, to a contracted education, cuſtom, falſe pride, and idolizing adulation, than to any defect in their intellectual capacities. The conteſt for equality in the mental capacity of the ſexes, has been maintained, on each ſide of the queſtion, with ingenuity; but as a judgment only can be formed from facts, as they ariſe in the preſent ſtate of things, if the experiments have been fairly tried, the rare inſtances of extraordinary talents, which have been brought forward to ſupport the ſyſtem of equa-

lity, muſt yield to the irreſiſtible influence of corporeal powers. Which leads to a concluſion, that the intellectual faculties of each ſex, are wiſely adapted to their appropriate purpoſes, and that, laying aſide the invidious terms of ſuperiority and inferiority, the perfection of mind in man and in woman, conſiſts in a power to maintain the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of excellence in each. But this conceſſion by no means proves, that even in this enlightened age and country, the talents of women have ever been generally exerted to the utmoſt extent of their capacity, or that they have been turned towards the moſt uſeful objects; neither does it imply, that the cultivation they receive, is adequate to bring into action the full ſtrength

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of thoſe powers, which have been beſtowed on them by nature. The intellectual faculties of the female mind have too long been confined by narrow and ill-directed modes of education, and thus have been concealed, not only from others, but from themſelves, the energies of which they are capable. The exigence of circumſtances in private life has called forth numberleſs examples of female prudence, magnanimity and fortitude, which demonſtrated no leſs a clearneſs of conception, than a warmth of feeling, reflecting equal honour upon the heads, and upon the hearts of the ſex. Neither has hiſtory been ſilent in recording memorable inſtances of female capacity, in all the various branches of human excellence.

These united testimonies are surely sufficient to justify an opinion, that the imperfect contributions to the mass of public activity have not arisen from a want of ability to be useful, but from some defect of another kind, which it is necessary to discover, that a remedy may be found, and applied to the evil.

In civilized nations it has ever been the misfortune of the sex to be too highly elevated, or too deeply depressed; now raised above the condition of mortals, upon the score of their personal attractions; and now debased below that of reasonable creatures, with respect to their intellectual endowments. The result of this improper treatment has been a neglect of the mental powers, which women really possess, but know not how

how to exerciſe; and they have been contented to barter the dignity of reaſon, for the imaginary privilege of an empire, of the exiſtence of which they can entertain no reaſonable hope beyond the duration of youth and beauty.

Of the few who have raiſed themſelves to pre-eminence by daring to ſtray beyond the accuſtomed path, the envy of their own ſex, and the jealouſy or contempt of the other, have too often been the attendants; a fate which doubtleſs has deterred others from attempting to follow them, or emulate, even in an inferior degree, the diſtinction they have attained.

But notwithſtanding theſe diſadvantages, and others of leſs perceptible influence, the diffuſion of chriſ-

tianity, and the progreſs of civiliza-tion, have raiſed the importance of the female character; and it has become a branch of philoſophy, not a little intereſting, to aſcertain the offices which the different ranks of women are required to fulfil. Their rights and their duties have lately occupied the pens of writers of eminence; the employments which may properly exerciſe their faculties, and fill up their time in a uſeful manner, without encroaching upon thoſe profeſſions, which are appro-priate to men, remain to be defined. There are many branches of ſcience, as well as uſeful occupations, in which women may employ their time and their talents, beneficially to themſelves and to the community, without deſtroying the peculiar cha-

racteriſtic

racteriſtic of their ſex, or exceeding the moſt exact limits of modeſty and decorum. Whatever obliges them to mix in the public haunts of men, or places the young in too familiar a ſituation with the other ſex; whatever is obnoxious to the delicacy and reſerve of the female character, or deſtructive, in the ſmalleſt degree, to the ſtricteſt moral purity, is inadmiſſible. The ſphere of feminine action is contracted by numberleſs difficulties, that are no impediments to maſculine exertions. Domeſtic privacy is the only ſure aſylum for the juvenile part of the ſex; nor can the grave matron ſtep far beyond that boundary with propriety. Unfitted, by their relative ſituation in ſociety, for many honourable and lucrative employments, thoſe only are ſuitable

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for them, which can be purſued without endangering their virtue, or corrupting their manners.

But, under theſe reſtrictions, there may be found a multitude of objects adapted to the uſeful exertions of female talents, which it will be the principal deſign of theſe Reflections to point out, after making ſome remarks upon the preſent ſtate of female education, and ſuggeſting ſome improvements towards its reformation.

And here the author may perhaps be allowed to expreſs her hope, that among the numbers of the female world, who appear to be ſatisfied with inferiority, many require only to be awakened to a true ſenſe of their own real conſequence, to be induced to ſupport it by a rational im-

improvement of thoſe hours, which they have hitherto waſted in the moſt frivolous occupations. The promotion of ſo uſeful a deſign, is the only apology for intruding her opinions upon the ſubject; and it will be eſteemed her higheſt recompence, ſhould her obſervations contribute to its accompliſhment.

CHAPTER II.

From the connexion between the Mind and the Body, is deduced the neceſſity of a more hardy mode of rearing Female Children.—The cauſe of an incapacity for ſuckling named, and the miſchiefs attending the practice of hired Nurſes to the Mother, the Child and the Nurſe, deſcribed, with a recommendation of more air and exerciſe being allowed to Girls.—Remarks on riſing, and the propriety of temperance in the rearing of Children enforced.

It is an opinion, pretty well eſtabliſhed, that the connexion between the mind and the body is of ſo cloſe and reciprocal a nature, that the health of the one materially depends upon the vigorous condition of the other. Though the laws which govern this union lie beyond the reach of

of human inveſtigation, a practical leſſon is deducible from the obſervation: We are inſtructed by it to fortify the body, in order to invigorate the powers of the mind. It would be difficult to give a ſufficient reaſon, why the advantages of the moſt probable mode of improving the natural qualities of the one and of the other, are not permitted to be extended with an equal hand to both ſexes. The moſt obvious ſolution of this ænigma, is parental ſolicitude for the preſervation of female beauty; endeavours are uſed to render our ſons active, vigorous, and enterprizing; but the principal care in forming the early habits of our daughters, is the conſideration of the effects of thoſe habits upon their perſonal character. Strength, agility, and

health,

health, are objects of primary importance, and ſhould be equally promoted in the education of girls, as in that of boys. No apprehenſions need be entertained of women becoming too robuſt; their natural inferiority in ſtrength, and the indiſpoſitions incident to child-bearing, will too often ſecure the feminine delicacy of their perſons and conſtitutions, and prevent them from acquiring more vigour than is requiſite to the performance of the active duties of the mother and the miſtreſs of a family.

The Spartans, whoſe political inſtitutions are ſtill celebrated, for being admirably adapted to produce a healthy and brave race of citizens, were particularly attentive to obſerve the moſt probable means of render-

ing their women robuſt, in order to obtain for the children they ſhould bring forth, the inheritance of a good conſtitution. The effects ariſing from this preparatory care fully correſponded with the deſign, and afford a convincing proof of its advantage. The mind and diſpoſition of an infant, as well as the conſtitution, are probably much influenced by thoſe of the mother, eſpecially during pregnancy, a period in which, for that reaſon, tumultuous pleaſures, violent paſſions, and an irregular life, ſhould be reſolutely avoided. The manners of our women of faſhion, are but ill calculated to prevent the degeneracy of the ſpecies; an object of great importance to the public welfare: crowded rooms, late hours, luxurious tables, and ſlothful inacti-

vity,

vity, muſt contribute to the production of a puny offspring, inadequate to the noble energies of patriotiſm and virtue.

The ſame cauſes, combined with the injudicious mode in which they have been brought up, deprive the greater part of females in high life, of the capacity of diſcharging the firſt maternal office, from which no rank, however elevated, can exempt them. The evils conſequent upon this defect, are of ſufficient magnitude to awaken the moſt ſtrenuous endeavours to prevent it. That which ſtrikes the imagination with the moſt forcible impreſſion, is the deſtruction, or at leaſt the diminution of that ſympathy between the mother and the child, for the promotion of which, nature has, in a thouſand ways,

ſo wiſely provided; but others, equally pernicious and more extenſive, are the frequent attendants of an inability to perform this ſacred taſk, or a voluntary neglect of it. The helpleſs infant is not only baniſhed from the arms of its mother, but is conſigned to the care of a ſubſtitute, who is tempted, by the expectation of large gains, to abandon her huſband and her family, to turn a deaf ear to the piteous cries of her own offspring, for that nouriſhment, which ſhe beſtows upon a ſtranger. Too frequently the life of this deſerted babe is ſacrificed; the huſband is rendered profligate; and the woman herſelf ſo much corrupted by her new mode of living, as to be unfitted to return to her humble ſtation.

The effeminate mode of educating

young ladies at preſent in vogue, is the ſource from whence this defect in the rearing of children in the higher ranks of life originates; an imperfection to which they are almoſt excluſively ſubject, for there is a very ſmall proportion of the labouring poor, who are unable to ſuckle their children; whereas a judicious writer aſſerts, that the converſe of this propoſition is true, with reſpect to the girls brought up at boarding-ſchools, which he attributes chiefly to confinement and want of exerciſe. The cuſtom of many ſleeping in the ſame chamber may alſo be added, as a probable cauſe of general unhealthineſs, as well as of indelicacy and indecorum. The many familiar treatiſes which have been written of late years for the uſe of mothers, by perſons

ſons eminent for medical abilities, have introduced a far more rational management of children during their infant ſtate than formerly, and exploded abſurdities in their food and clothing, which were not deſtructive of health and enjoyment only, but alſo of the growth and ſymmetry of their limbs.

The ſyſtem of improvement has been principally confined to the period of infancy; leſs attention ſeems to have been beſtowed upon invigorating the conſtitution of girls, as they advance towards maturity; but it is not ſufficient to lay a good foundation, ſome attention ſhould ſurely be paid to the ſuperſtructure. The free uſe of air and exerciſe is the common gift of Heaven, from which none ſhould be debarred from

motives of ſmall importance; but how often has an over anxiety for the delicacy of her complexion, or the apprehenſion of her becoming a romp, reſtrained a girl from the indulgence of enjoying either, in a degree ſufficient to ſecure her from that feeble, ſickly, languid ſtate, which frequently renders her not only capricious, but helpleſs, through the whole courſe of her life. There is no reaſon for maintaining any ſexual diſtinctions in the bodily exerciſes of children; if it is right to give both ſexes all the corporal advantages, which nature has formed them to enjoy, let them both partake of the ſame rational means of obtaining a flow of health and animal ſpirits, to enable them to perform the functions of life. Let girls be no longer confined

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to ſedentary employments in a nurſery, or at beſt permitted to take a gentle walk in a garden, as an apology for more vigorous exertions; whilſt their brothers are allowed the unreſtrained enjoyment of their active powers, regardleſs of ſoiling their clothes, or the inconveniences of the various ſeaſons. The firſt occupations of the day ſhould be abroad, for the benefit of inhaling the morning air; not that their excurſions ſhould be confined to that part of the day alone, they ſhould live out of doors as much as poſſible, without interfering with the neceſſary avocations, which will ſometimes unavoidably oblige them to remain in the houſe. Employments ſhould be contrived on purpoſe to induce them to paſs a large portion of their time in the air,

nor ſhould they ever be permitted to ſit within long at one time. A mere walk ſcarcely ſupplies ſufficient exerciſe to produce a quick circulation, ſomething therefore more active ſhould be adopted: running races, trundling a hoop, ſkipping with a rope, battledore and ſhuttle-cock, ball, jumping, dumb-bells, ſwinging, and many other amuſements of the like nature, are ſuitable for the purpoſe, and may, with equal propriety, be practiſed by both ſexes, being by no means incompatible with delicacy of perſon or manners. Let it never be forgotten, that true delicacy conſiſts in purity of ſentiment, and is as much ſuperior to its ſubſtitute, external manners, as is a real gem to one that is artificial.

Though girls may not be able to bear

bear the extremes of heat and cold ſo well as boys, yet, by gradual advances, they may be enured to bear the tranſitions of the ſeaſons without much inconvenience; nor ought they, if healthy, to be ſo tender as to be confined to the houſe by the coldeſt day that is felt in our climate. An habitual uſe of the cold bath is conducive to fortify the habit, and enable it to reſiſt the changes of the atmoſphere; where that cannot be obtained, a liberal uſe of cold water ſhould be ſubſtituted for it, as neceſſary for the combined purpoſes of health, and cleanlineſs of perſon. It is a miſtaken notion, that children ſhould wear the ſame clothing in winter as in ſummer, with deſign to make them hardy; in this changeable climate, their dreſs ſhould be regulated

by the weather, and warm flannel petticoats and worſted ſtockings, may be conſidered as neceſſary for maintaining a briſk circulation, and encouraging a willingneſs to play abroad when the cold is ſevere. Warmth, lightneſs, and convenience, are eſſential requiſites in the dreſs of a child; every reſtraint that tends to diſtort, and compreſs any part of the body, is as injurious to grace and proportion, as to health. Steel collars, braces, back-boards, and feet-ſtocks, may be carried to a very dangerous exceſs, and cauſe that deformity, which they are intended to prevent.

Length of time is neceſſary to confirm the aſcendancy of reaſon over eſtabliſhed prejudices; our great-grandmothers would have been alarmed for the ſafety of an infant,

whoſe head had not been confined with a bridle, its body bound with a long bandage of flannel, and its hands pinned down under a napkin, during at leaſt the firſt ſix months of its life. Neither could they have reconciled to their falſe notions of modeſty, the appearing in public without the encloſure of ſtays, reſembling the armour of ancient warriors, in their unwieldy form and texture. Experience has proved the utility of theſe alterations; inſtances of deformity are rare among women to what they were formerly, when tight and ſtiff ſtays were in general uſe. The ſuperior elegance of the preſent eaſy mode, will probably ſecure it from the effects of the verſatile ſpirit of faſhion, and ſupport it more powerfully, than even its phyſical advantages, great as they are acknowledged

ledged to be. It is deſirable that the lower claſſes ſhould partake of the benefits of this improvement in female apparel, and that leathern bodice and whalebone ſtays ſhould be indiſcriminately baniſhed together; for, ſo far from theſe unyielding machines affording ſupport to the wearer, and aſſiſting her to perform laborious employments with greater eaſe, they are a painful impediment to the motions of the body, and prevent the full exertion of her ſtrength.

The advantages of early riſing, at every period of life, are ſo obvious, that it ſeems almoſt unneceſſary to enforce it, as of eſſential moment in forming the early habits of children; but a caution may not be uſeleſs againſt either extreme, of diſturbing a child out of its natural ſleep, or ſuffering it to fall aſleep again, when

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once thoroughly awakened. When a child is accuſtomed to riſe as ſoon as it wakes, it will not be difficult to continue it in that practice. Healthy children are generally alert and lively as ſoon as they open their eyes, and free from that ſluggiſh heavineſs, to which adults are often ſubject, either from the groſſneſs, or abundant quantity of their food; or from a propenſity to the indulgence of more ſleep than nature requires.

Temperance ſhould be inculcated as a moral obligation, no leſs than as a preſervative of health and cheerfulneſs. It conſiſts not only in ſimplicity of diet, but in a reſtriction as to exceſs in quantity. Let the food of children be wholeſome, nouriſhing, and void of allurements to eat more than is required

quired to ſatisfy the appetite. Their meals ſhould be regular, and return ſufficiently often, to prevent long abſtinence, which is injurious to their growth; but they ſhould never be indulged in the improper cuſtom of eating or drinking between the ſtated times.

Theſe few hints upon the perſonal management of girls, as far as relates to the promotion of their health, appeared to belong to the plan of the work; but as education is not its principal object, general obſervations are ſufficient for the purpoſe; the ſubject having been treated more at large by much abler pens. It is only intended to recommend a ſyſtem of greater energy, as preparatory to a more vigorous cultivation of the mental faculties.

CHAPTER III.

Remarks on the duties of a married and a ſingle life.—Maternal tuition, when practicable, recommended; with a ſketch of the qualifications of a Governeſs.—Plan ſuggeſted for a Female College, and Select Day Schools propoſed.—Ranks in ſociety diſcriminated.—The neceſſity of Women being educated for the exerciſe of lucrative employments ſhewn, and the abſurdity of a Woman honourably earning a ſupport, being excluded from Society, expoſed.

In the education of females, the ſame view actuates every rank: an advantageous ſettlement in marriage is the univerſal prize, for which parents of all claſſes enter their daughters upon the liſts; and partiality or ſelf complacency aſſures to every competitor the moſt flattering proſpect of ſucceſs. To this one point

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tends the principal part of female inſtruction; for the promotion of this deſign, their beſt years for improvement are ſacrificed to the attainment of attractive qualities, ſhewy ſuperficial accompliſhments, poliſhed manners, and in one word, the whole ſcience of pleaſing, which is cultivated with unceaſing aſſiduity, as an object of the moſt eſſential importance.

The end is laudable, and deſerving of every effort that can be exerted to ſecure it; a happy marriage may be eſtimated among the rareſt felicities of human life; but it may be doubted, whether the means uſed to accompliſh it are adequate to the purpoſe; as the making a firſt impreſſion, is by no means effectual to determine the preference of a wiſe man.

man. It is not then ſufficient, that a girl be qualified to excite admiration; her own happineſs, and that of the man to whom ſhe devotes the remainder of her days, depend upon her poſſeſſion of thoſe virtues, which alone can preſerve laſting eſteem and confidence.

The offices of a wife are very different from thoſe of the mere pageant of a ball-room; and as their nature is more exalted, the talents they require are of a more noble kind: ſomething far beyond the elegant trifler is wanted in a companion for life. A young woman is very ill-adapted to enter into the moſt ſolemn of ſocial contracts, who is not prepared, by her education, to become the participator of her huſband's cares, the conſoler of his ſorrows, his ſti-

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mulator to every praiſe-worthy undertaking, his partner in the labours and viciſſitudes of life, the faithful and œconomical manager of his affairs, the judicious ſuperintendant of his family, the wiſe and affectionate mother of his children, the preſerver of his honour, his chief counſellor, and, to ſum up all, the choſen friend of his boſom. If a modern female education be not calculated to produce theſe effects, as few ſurely will judge it to be, who reflect upon its tendency, it is incompetent to that very purpoſe, which is confeſſedly its main object, and muſt therefore be deemed imperfect, and require reformation.

Before the defects of the preſent ſyſtem are pointed out, let an enquiry alſo take place, whether it be better

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ſuited to qualify women for ſuſtaining the other characters which they may be deſtined to fulfil. Thoſe of widowhood and a ſingle life are the allotment of many, and to ſupport them with dignity, requires peculiar force of mind. Adverſity often places both ſexes in ſituations wholly unexpected; againſt ſuch tranſitions, the voice of wiſdom admoniſhes each to be prepared, by early initiation into general principles ſuited to fortify the mind, to ſuſtain the unavoidable ſtrokes of fortune with firmneſs, and to exert the moſt prudent means to obviate their conſequences; but the bias given to the female mind in the preſent ſyſtem of education, encourages the keeneſt ſenſibility on the moſt trifling occaſions, its chief de-

ſign being to poliſh, rather than to ſtrengthen.

The regulation of the temper, is of all qualities the moſt uſeful to conduct us ſteadily through the vexatious circumſtances, which attack, with undiſtinguiſhing annoyance, the proſperous and the unfortunate; and is ſupereminently neceſſary to women, whoſe peculiar office it is, to ſmooth the inconveniences of domeſtic life; though as a moral obligation, equally incumbent upon men. A well governed temper is the ſupport of ſocial enjoyment, and the bond of conjugal affection; deficient in this qualification, a mother is incapacitated from preſiding over the education of her children, and a miſtreſs unfitted to govern her ſervants. The ſelf-command recommended,

differs widely from that apathy of diſpoſition, which is the effect of conſtitution; in order to enſure reſpect and love, it muſt poſſeſs an equability, which can only reſult from reflection and habitual culture. Such a ſubjection of the angry paſſions to reaſon and duty, accommodates itſelf to circumſtances, and the diſpoſition of others with whom we are connected; it gives a decided ſuperiority in every conteſt, and is of ineſtimable value to the poſſeſſor, on every occaſion of trial.

The chief ſources of caprice and petulance, are weakneſs of underſtanding, or early habits of unreſtrained indulgence; the firſt is a misfortune, but the laſt ſhould be guarded againſt with the ſtricteſt precaution. A girl ſhould be impreſſed,

from the firſt dawnings of reaſon, that ſhe lives, not for herſelf only, but to contribute to the happineſs of others; let her be ſometimes told, that in the probable events of futurity, her path of duty may lie in ſharing the cares of her huſband, perhaps in conſoling him under misfortunes, and in bearing patiently the inequalities of his temper, ruffled by adverſe accidents; that ſo far from ſhewing diſcontent, it will be her part to ſoften theſe aſperities, by a ſteady command over her own paſſions, which can only be attained by continual exerciſe, opportunities for which, the minute occurrences of ſocial and domeſtic life will daily preſent. That ſhould her deſtination be to remain an inhabitant in her father's houſe, cheerfulneſs, good temper,

per, and an obliging reſignation of her will to that of others, will be there equally her duty, and her intereſt; that it will belong to her to enliven, to cheer, to amuſe the latter moments of her parent's declining age; that the virtue neceſſary for bearing with the infirmities of mind and body, incident to thoſe days in which there is no pleaſure, is not the momentary effuſion of good-humour, but an even principle, too firmly eſtabliſhed to be diſconcerted by trifling incidents; that it is a branch of that charity, which ſuffereth long, and is kind, which envieth not, nor vaunteth itſelf, nor is puffed up, neither is it eaſily provoked; that it extends with equal benignity to the noble and the mean, and that it never ſhines with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre,

than in a conteſt with a rival, over whom it forbids to triumph, even in the moment of victory.

Is it becauſe the vanity of parents and governeſſes induces them to beſtow the moſt aſſiduous pains in the inſtruction of their pupils, in thoſe accompliſhments, which ſtrike the obſerver with an equal degree of admiration for the talents of the teacher, as for thoſe of the ſcholar, that the regulation of the temper, and principles, objects leſs calculated to excite the attention of ſtrangers, are abandoned to the uncertain influence of accidental impreſſions. Or is the culture of the heart ſo much more difficult than that of the head, that few attempt the taſk by any other means, than by dry unimpreſſive lectures, which are forgotten as ſoon

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as they are paſt, and are totally inefficacious to influence the conduct? The indiſpenſable obligation of forming the morals and diſpoſitions of our ſcholars, by example, increaſes the obſtacles to this branch of education, and is a probable cauſe of the general deficiency in it. Mothers only can be expected to make the ſacrifices neceſſary for this important work; no other perſon can feel the ſame intereſt in the event, nor can any occupation in which they may be engaged have ſo powerful a claim upon their attention, unleſs it be for the actual ſupport of the family. It is a very erroneous miſapplication of time, for a woman who fills the honourable and reſponſible character of a parent, to waſte her days in the frivolous em-

ployment of needle-work, or the executive minutiæ of domeſtic affairs, for which ſubſtitutes of equal ability may be ſo eaſily provided, if ſhe be capable of taking an active part in forming the minds of her children. Surely it would be a more profitable diſpoſal of time and money, to appoint a houſe-keeper to perform theſe concerns of inferior importance, and to diſcharge in perſon the tender and eſſential office of governeſs; at leaſt, as far as reſpects principles, religion, morals, and the cultivation of the heart. But let not any mother preſume to engage in this ſacred and delightful taſk, without firſt enquiring of herſelf, whether ſhe be able to renounce foreign pleaſures, whether ſhe can reſtrain herſelf from the diſſipated indulgence, authoriſed by cuſtom to

thoſe in affluent circumſtances; whether ſhe have courage and perſeverance to riſe early and watch late, to devote her whole time and undivided attention to this one great object, and finally, whether ſhe can rely upon herſelf, to ſet ſuch an example of ſelf-government, as ſhall illuſtrate her own precepts in the moſt forcible manner.

Difficult as theſe qualifications may appear to be of attainment, they need not deter the humble and the diffident, who are ſincerely attached to the beſt intereſts of their offſpring: earneſtneſs in the cauſe, and a determination to perform the part of duty, will overcome barriers that ſeem inſurmountable. Maternal affection properly directed, with fortitude, and application, will capacitate

citate for the office, and enable an aſſiduous mother to ſucceed better, than any delegate ſhe can engage, whatever may be her pretenſions. No doubt can be entertained, but that a ſure reward will follow this ſacrifice to duty, beſides that of the pleaſure of the employment; ſhould even the moſt judicious and unremitted endeavours be fruſtrated by a perverſe diſpoſition, or an unhappy concurrence of circumſtances, a conſciouſneſs of having performed the part aſſigned by nature, according to the moſt deliberative judgment, will ſupply conſolation in the moſt afflicting moments of miſconduct and ingratitude; when thoſe who have neglected the ſuperintendance of their children's education for other purſuits, may reflect upon themſelves

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for not having done their utmoſt, to prevent ſo great an evil.—This advantage alone, without inſiſting upon the greater probability of ſucceſs than of failure, is ſufficient to give a decided preference to the education of girls under the maternal eye.

But after every argument has been urged in favour of domeſtic inſtruction, it muſt be acknowledged, that there are many circumſtances which render the adoption of it improper; ſuch as want of health, temper, or ability; avocations that cannot be diſpenſed with; a huſband's diſapprobation, and various other peculiarities of ſituation which completely exonerate a mother from the undertaking; it is contended only, that where it is practicable, it is always deſirable, and that, in proportion as

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the cuſtom becomes prevalent, female diſſipation will decline. A woman earneſtly occupied in this moſt intereſting of all engagements, has no leiſure to court the ſtupid gaze of caſual admiration: dreſs and public diverſions of courſe loſe their attraction, her treaſure is at home, and where the treaſure is, there is high authority for believing that the heart will be. Some of the unhappy deviations from conjugal fidelity, which of late years have ſo often given employment to the gentlemen of Doctors Commons, might probably have never diſgraced our courts of juſtice, nor thrown a public odium upon the ſex, had the wretched delinquents fulfilled the tender duties of the maternal character. Were it poſſible to trace the majority of

theſe miſerable inſtances of depravity to their ſource, it is reaſonable to believe, that the firſt falſe ſtep would be found to proceed from the want of energetic employment, an indolent vacuity of mind, which produced a weariſome reſtleſsneſs, and led to diſſipation as a relief. How dangerous ſuch reſources are, has alas too frequently been manifeſt! It is ſcarcely a poſſible ſuppoſition, that the boldeſt ſeducer, however confident in the impoſing influence of his arts to betray, ſhould dare to whiſper his unhallowed love in the ear of her, whom he ſaw devoted to the duties of the conjugal ſtate, and daily employed in the education of her children; whoſe time was unceaſingly filled up with a ſucceſſion of well-choſen objects: a ſlight acquaintance

quaintance would convince him, that ſhe was a hopeleſs purſuit, and that there was no chance of ſucceſs with one, whoſe mind was ſo virtuouſly pre-occupied. Let then intereſting employment, ſuch as deſerve the name of buſineſs, be purſued as a taliſman, to preſerve thoſe women who are virtuous, from becoming victims to the deluſions of vice; and if ſuch be the efficacy of occupation, mothers of all degrees cannot too earneſtly habituate their daughters to daily application to ſome object of real utility.

When parents are compelled to reſign their tender charge to the care of others, what cautions are neceſſary in the choice of the perſons to whom they are entruſted! After having expatiated upon the requiſites of a

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maternal preceptor, it is almoſt needleſs to remark, that few of the candidates for the important office of educating youth, are fitted for it; nay, very few have even an idea of the ſevere ſacrifices which the undertaking requires, if it is properly performed. How many mothers ſhrink from the taſk, unable to ſubmit to the fatigue, and confer it upon ſtrangers, whoſe principal recommendation too frequently is their poverty. The miſtreſs of the ſeminary, is perhaps by birth a gentlewoman, reduced by adverſity to ſeek a ſupport from ſuch an eſtabliſhment; her mind may have been enlarged by liberal inſtruction, and her heart raiſed above mere ſordid views; but if her ſcholars be numerous, ſhe is obliged, from the

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preſſure of her avocations, to make a ſecond transfer of her pupils to the tuition and ſociety of her teachers; a claſs of women, generally ſpeaking, for there are doubtleſs many reſpectable exceptions, who are both ignorant and unprincipled; a ſmattering of the French language, and ſkill in the ornamental works which are in vogue, conſtitute their chief knowledge. The misfortunes of individuals, occaſioned by the revolution of France, has probably furniſhed a ſupply of theſe ſubordinate inſtructors, better qualified for their office; but antecedent to the period abovementioned, many natives of that country, who had loſt their characters at home, came here, and found employment as teachers in our boarding-ſchools. Thoſe who preſide

ſide over inſtitutions for the education of children, whether male or female, can never be too conſcientiouſly ſcrupulous in ſelecting ſuch aſſiſtants only, whoſe moral characters will bear the ſtricteſt inveſtigation. It is to be feared that a preference is often given to thoſe, who will engage for the loweſt ſalary, without ſearching very cloſely into any of their qualifications, beyond thoſe of a ſuperficial knowledge of the common accompliſhments. Principles, exemplary conduct, and experience in their profeſſions, are overlooked as things too rare to be found.

The difficulty of meeting with perſons properly qualified to be the preceptors and guides of the uncorrupted minds of youth, is allowed to be great, and ſuggeſts the advantages

which might ariſe, from the eſtabliſhment of inſtitutions for the expreſs purpoſe of educating young women, of ſmall expectations, for the office. Theſe inſtitutions ſhould be ſufficiently endowed, to provide maſters in every uſeful ſcience, and to furniſh a well-choſen library, conſiſting of the moſt approved authors, with globes, and other ſuitable apparatus for inſtruction, and after a certain number of years, women only ſhould be nominated to the charge of inſtruction. The effect of ſuch ſeminaries would be a conſtant ſucceſſion of female teachers properly prepared for their deſtination, not only by a regular courſe of ſtudy, but alſo by a thorough initiation into the philoſophical principles of education, founded upon the opinions

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of the moſt eminent writers upon the ſubject. Another beneficial conſequence would be, the affording a reſpectable ſubſiſtence to great numbers of young women, who are reduced to miſery through want of employment, by enabling them to teach thoſe ſciences, which are excluſively taught by maſters, an evil that calls loudly for redreſs. Surely it can never be denied, that the inſtruction of girls in every department of knowledge or art, is a fair field for the exertion of female talents. Is it compatible with propriety or decency, that the perſons of girls advancing towards maturity, ſhould be expoſed to the wanton eye of a dancing-maſter? Are not the faſcinating tones of muſic as dangerous as the graces of dancing, in ex-

citing the tendet emotions? Women only, therefore, ſhould be permitted to inſtruct the ſex in theſe ſeductive arts. It ought to be their privilege to do ſo in every other. Nature has impoſed no invincible barrier to their acquiſition and communication of languages, arithmetic, writing, drawing, geography, or any ſcience which is proper for girls to learn. Some efforts ſeem already to have been made for promoting the ſubſtitution of female teachers inſtead of maſters. In many ſchools of eminence muſic is taught by female profeſſors; but the entire excluſion of maſters from girls boarding-ſchools can never be effected, until a ſufficient number of women are qualified to ſupply their places, and the plan is patronized by parents and guardians. Were a due

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conſideration of this ſubject to take place in the minds of the public, the advantages are ſo many, and ſo obvious, that a decided preference would certainly be given to all female inſtructors, when equally qualified by a profound knowledge of the peculiar department of ſcience they profeſs to teach, as thoſe male profeſſors who have ſo long ſupplanted them in occupations to which they alone have a reaſonable claim.

Whilſt we remain without a proviſion for a more regular courſe of preparation for the reſpective offices of governeſs and teacher, not only in the various branches of inſtruction, but likewiſe in the particular knowledge which is eſſential to their profeſſion, by which is meant, a philoſophical knowledge, founded upon

principle, of cultivating the heart, and forming the future character; by correcting the depraved propenſities of the former, and ſubſtituting in their places fixed habits of virtue; a conſiderable improvement upon the preſent plan might be effected, by the appropriation of ſchools to the different claſſes of ſociety. At preſent there is ſcarcely any diſcrimination between the daughters of noblemen and thoſe of tradeſmen, they are both educated upon nearly the ſame ſyſtem, without any reference to their future deſtination in life. The opulent can afford to pay ſuch a ſtipend with their children, as may enable the proprietor to reſtrict her number, to as many only as ſhe can inſtruct herſelf; which would give her an opportunity of ſtudy-

ſtudying the diſpoſition and natural character of each of her pupils, and capacitate her to apply remedies adapted to reform their peculiar defects. A ſchool upon ſuch a foundation, under the direction of a judicious perſon, would poſſeſs the advantages of private education, combined with thoſe of ſocial inſtruction, unalloyed by the evils which are unavoidable in large ſeminaries. As the expence of a very confined number, ſupported in a genteel ſtyle, and recompenſing the governeſs liberally for the whole of her time and attention, would exceed the ability of moderate circumſtances; ſelect day-ſchools, preſerved ſo by terms proportioned to the claſs for the uſe of which they are deſigned, ſhould be generally inſtituted for the accom-

modation of thoſe parents, whom prudence reſtrains from ſending their children to boarding-ſchools of the above deſcription. Day-ſchools, if preſerved from an improper mixture of children, are preferable in many reſpects to boarding-ſchools, as they afford opportunities for maternal inſtruction, in the intervals between the hours of attendance, to thoſe parents who are prevented from taking the entire charge of the education of their daughters, either by domeſtic avocations, or the rearing a ſucceſſion of younger children, and are obliged to have recourſe to a ſchool for their learning, yet can ſpare a little leiſure, without detriment to their families, to the improvement of their minds in thoſe things, which cannot be ſo effectually impreſſed by general pre-

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cepts delivered to numbers, as in the retirement of familiar converſation. Opportunities of conveying much uſeful knowledge, which can only be acquired in a private family, may frequently occur to a mother, watchful of every occaſion of ſuggeſting inſtruction; domeſtic œconomy, tender offices to the ſick, the management of infants, and other occupations of a ſimilar nature, may furniſh amuſement as well as inſtruction to girls above ten years of age, during their hours of recreation, both from the novelty of the employments, and the conſequence annexed to the exerciſe of them.

There cannot be a more miſtaken tenderneſs than to give an education to our children diſproportioned to the rank they are likely to fill in ſociety.

ciety. Tradeſmen and mechanics are fond of bringing up their daughters in what they term a genteel manner; that is, ſending them, at a very inconvenient expence, perhaps as half-boarders, to an elegant boarding-ſchool, where they preſently imbibe a deſire of emulating their ſuperiors in dreſs, ſhewy qualifications and faſhionable folly. They ſhould not only be prohibited from learning the ornamental arts, ſuch as muſic, dancing, drawing, foreign languages, and coſtly works of taſte, (unleſs they are brought up for teachers) but they ſhould never be placed at a ſchool where thoſe arts are taught; for it is a natural propenſity of the human mind, to prefer that which is beautiful and pleaſant, to thoſe things which though uſeful

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are unadorned. Reſpectable ſchools, not aiming at gentility, as it is uſually termed, ſhould therefore be eſtabliſhed for the expreſs purpoſe of educating young women of this claſs, where they might acquire whatever knowledge is conducive to render them uſeful in their ſtation, without having their ſimplicity corrupted by an intercourſe with thoſe, who have a reaſonable title to the indulgences of affluence, and the acquiſition of liberal accompliſhments. The deſign of early inſtruction is to qualify the pupil to perform that part, which it is probable will be her future allotment; conſequently whatever defeats this purpoſe is abſurd; a refined education is therefore extremely improper for thoſe, whoſe humble views confine them to the employments of

an inferior ſtation. Falſe notions of enjoyment, and a dangerous taſte for elegance, acquired at boarding-ſchool, have been the unhappy means of caſting many women ſo ſituated into the abyſs of proſtitution. Too proud for the lowly occupations of their parents, and filled with the ambition of obtaining a ſettlement above that of their equals, they imagine that they have only to diſplay the charms of youth and beauty, adorned by a modiſh ſtyle of dreſs, to enſure an eſtabliſhment that will be anſwerable to their wiſhes; but inſtead of promoting a laſting advantage, this ridiculous conduct frequently expoſes them to the obſervation of the vicious, amongſt thoſe who rank as their ſuperiors of the oppoſite ſex, who beſet them with

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temptations, irreſiſtible to minds devoid of fixed principles of right and wrong, and whoſe peculiar errors aſſiſt to betray them into the ſnare that is laid for them.

The injudicious practice of bringing up girls above their expectations, originates in a common opinion, that a good education is more valuable than a dowry; the ſentiment is a juſt one, the error conſiſts in a miſapprehenſion of what conſtitutes a good education: No ſyſtem of inſtruction can properly be denominated good, which is not appropriate to thoſe who receive it: Of what uſe would it be to a ſeaman to learn the theory of agriculture? To him it would be only a ſpeculative knowledge, which he could not apply in the exerciſe of his profeſſion; neither would

would many parts of nautical ſkill, which are indiſpenſable to an admiral, whoſe office is to command a fleet, be of ſervice to a ſailor before the maſt, whoſe buſineſs is confined to the ſervile departments of a ſeafaring life. A ſimilar appropriation of qualifications to fortune and expectations, is neceſſary likewiſe amongſt women; for it cannot be ſuppoſed that a butcher's wife will ſerve her huſband's cuſtomers, or a moderate farmer's daughter manage the dairy or the poultry-yard with more adroitneſs, for knowing how to walk a minuet, or to play upon the harpſichord. In order therefore to fit every one for their ſtation, ſchools ſhould be eſtabliſhed adapted to the different deſcriptions of children.

Society

Society may be reſolved into four claſſes or degrees; the firſt comprehends the nobility, and all thoſe who, either by the influence of high offices, or extenſive hereditary poſſeſſions, rival them in power; the ſecond contains thoſe, who by the application of their talents to learning, commerce, manufactures or agriculture, procure a reſpectable ſubſiſtence approaching to opulence; to the third may be referred thoſe, whoſe honeſt and uſeful induſtry raiſes them above want, without procuring for them the means of ſplendid or luxurious gratification: The fourth is compoſed of the labouring poor: The rank of women being determined by the accident of their birth, or their connections in marriage, a correſpondent arrangement is, with equal

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propriety, applicable to them, as to the other ſex.

An inquiry into the objects of attainment, employments, and purſuits of the different claſſes of the one ſex, will throw light upon thoſe that ought to occupy the correſponding ranks of the other.

Noblemen, and gentlemen of independent property, receive a courſe of inſtruction adapted to prepare them for filling up the higheſt offices in the different departments of the ſtate, conſiſtently with their own dignity, and the ſervice of their country; or to maintain the inviolability of our valuable conſtitution, as diſtinguiſhed ornaments in the ſenate, or at the bar.—The learned profeſſions, or the lucrative and reſpectable avocations of commercial life, are

ſources of honour and wealth to the inferior gentry and merchants. Farmers, tradeſmen and artificers, beſides the general acquiſition of the ſimpler branches of learning, attain the knowledge of ſome peculiar art, or branch of commerce, by which they are enabled to gain a competent ſupport.

The neceſſity of directing the attention of females to ſome certain occupation is not ſo apparent, becauſe cuſtom has rendered them dependant upon their fathers and huſbands for ſupport; but as ſome of every claſs experience the loſs of thoſe relations, without inheriting an adequate reſource, there would be great propriety in preparing each of them, by an education of energy and uſeful attainments, to meet ſuch diſ-

aſters, and to be able, under ſuch circumſtances, to procure an independence for themſelves. There is ſcarcely a more helpleſs object in the wide circle of miſery which the viciſſitudes of civilized ſociety diſplay, than a woman genteelly educated, whether ſingle or married, who is deprived, by any unfortunate accident, of the protection and ſupport of male relations; unaccuſtomed to ſtruggle with difficulty, unacquainted with any reſource to ſupply an independent maintenance, ſhe is reduced to the depths of wretchedneſs, and not unfrequently, if ſhe be young and handſome, is driven by deſpair to thoſe paths which lead to infamy. Is it not time to find a remedy for ſuch evils, when the contention of nations has produced the moſt affecting

ſecting tranſitions in private life, and transferred the affluent and the noble to the humiliating extremes of want and obſcurity? When our ſtreets teem with multitudes of unhappy women, many of whom might have been reſcued from their preſent degradation, or who would perhaps never have fallen into it, had they been inſtructed in the exerciſe of ſome art or profeſſion, which would have enabled them to procure for themſelves a reſpectable ſupport by their own induſtry.

This reaſonable precaution againſt the accidents of life is reſiſted by prejudice, which riſes like an inſurmountable barrier againſt a woman, of any degree above the vulgar, employing her time and her abilities, towards the maintenance of herſelf

and her family: degradation of rank immediately follows the virtuous attempt, as it did formerly, among the younger branches of the noble families in France. But the nature of truth is immutable, however it may be obſcured by error: that which is a moral excellence in one rational being, deſerves the ſame eſtimation in another; therefore, if it be really honourable in a man, to exert the utmoſt of his abilities, whether mental or corporal, in the acquiſition of a competent ſupport for himſelf, and for thoſe who have a natural claim upon his protection; it muſt be equally ſo in a woman, nay, perhaps ſtill more incumbent, as in many caſes, there is nothing ſo inimical to the preſervation of her virtue as a ſtate of poverty, which leaves

leaves her dependant upon the generoſity of others, to ſupply thoſe accommodations, which uſe has rendered neceſſary to her comfort.

There appears then no moral impediment to prevent women from the application of their talents to purpoſes of utility; on the contrary, an improvement in public manners muſt infallibly reſult from it; as their influence over the other ſex is univerſally acknowledged, it may be boldly aſſerted, that a converſion of their time from trifling and unproductive employments, to thoſe that are both uſeful and profitable, would operate as a check upon luxury, diſſipation, and prodigality, and retard the progreſs of that general diſſoluteneſs, the offspring of idleneſs, which is

deprecated by all political writers, as the ſure forerunner of national decay.

Some alteration in the general turn of thinking among young women, muſt take place before they can be perſuaded to render themſelves capable of theſe uſeful exertions; and that can be produced only by the early impreſſions they imbibe; the manner in which they are received in ſociety, after ſuch application; and their finding no impediment ariſe from it to their ſettlement in marriage. It cannot be expected that young females will of choice apply themſelves to ſerious ſtudies, or be willing to become induſtrious members of the community, whilſt they are impreſſed from infancy with a notion, that they are born only to

create admiration, and that they are excluded from the neceſſity of any regular occupation, beyond that of domeſtic ſuperintendance, or what conduces to the acquiſition of elegant accompliſhments. The correction of theſe errors depends upon the diſcretion of thoſe, whoſe duty it is to form their opinions upon juſt principles. But their reception in ſociety reſts not upon the propriety of their ſentiments, or the prudence of their conduct, in this reſpect; it can only be aſſured to them by perſons of rank and conſequence, whoſe countenance will be ſufficient gradually to undermine the unreaſonable prepoſſeſſion againſt the exerciſe of female induſtry. Can it be accounted for on any other ground than that of prejudice, in a country

like England, where commerce forms one of the principal ſinews of national ſtrength, where the character of the merchant is honourable, and no obſtacle to a favourable reception in the higheſt circles, that degradation ſhould attend the female who engages in the concerns of commerce, and that ſhe whoſe good ſenſe and reſolution enable her to ſupport herſelf, is baniſhed from that line of company, of which ſhe had perhaps previouſly formed a diſtinguiſhed ornament? One of the effects of this ill-directed pride, is to deter young men of liberal proſpects, from demeaning themſelves, as it is erroneouſly termed, by marrying a girl who has been trained up to any profitable employment. How much more reaſonable would it be to give

them

them a preference on account of this mark of their ſuperior judgment, which may fairly be eſtimated as an earneſt of their becoming uſeful helpmates through the uncertain contingency of future events.

Were but theſe three barriers removed, of falſe notions, excluſion from ſociety, or diminiſhing the chance of an advantageous marriage; the example of a few might influence others, and extend like a drop of oil ſpread upon the ſurface of the water. But where are the parents, who have ſufficient independence of mind to encourage their daughters to lead the way, and to prepare them, by an improved plan of education, to ſucceed in it? To lay aſide the fetters of prejudice, and adopt a practice contrary to eſtabliſhed cuſtoms, requires

quires a cool unbiaſſed judgment, and unſhaken reſolution to comply with its dictates. The utility of the object would apologize for the innovation, and the difficulty of the attempt but enhances its merit. The word reform, has become the ſignal of a party, and the fear of change may render ſome averſe from the very idea of introducing an alteration in female manners: But let ſuch be informed, that it is not a novelty that is propoſed; the Dutch adopted it in part a century ago, as we are told by Sir Joſiah Child, in his diſcourſe concerning trade, wherein he remarks that the education of the Dutch women prepared them to receive inſtruction from their huſbands, in the different ſpecies of commerce in which they were engaged: He recommends

commends the imitation of this example to the Engliſh, as one of the means that promoted the riches and proſperity of Holland; and contributed in no ſmall degree to the happineſs of individuals: And as he does not ſtate that any inconvenience aroſe from this practice, it is candid to ſuppoſe that this uſeful knowledge had no ill effect upon the Dutch women, to render them independent of their huſbands, or leſs ſubmiſſive to their authority, than the wives of modern times.

The firſt ſtep to be purſued towards this deſirable improvement, is the adoption of a more energetic mode of education. Inſtruction has been beſtowed upon girls with a much greater liberality of late years than formerly; and it will ſcarcely

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be controverted, that the beneficial effects of it are apparent, in the improved ſtate of female knowledge and conduct. But they are ſtill taught, what they learn, too ſuperficially, and the more ſolid acquirements are too often neglected. Muſic, dancing, dreſs, and works of fancy, engroſs a larger ſhare of time and attention than is their due: they ſhould be regarded as amuſements, rather than as occupations, and be reſtrained within a proper ſubordination to thoſe purſuits, which are ſuperior in their nature and conſequence. The importance of promoting health and vigour of conſtitution, has been already ſuggeſted as a ſuitable foundation for the attainment of ſtrength of mind; with which may properly be combined, whatever

ever is conducive to perſonal beauty or graceful deportment; for it is not aſſerted, that external appearance is unworthy of all regard, it certainly claims a due attention; but it is adviſable to temper that care with every poſſible precaution againſt exciting the emotions of ſelf-complacency and perſonal vanity, the moſt dangerous of all qualities in a female mind, as they are the ſource of the moſt common errors in female conduct. One injurious conſequence of a vain mind, is an extravagant taſte for dreſs, and exhibiting the perſon in public places; a diſpoſition ſubverſive of domeſtic happineſs, and that ſobriety of character, which, in youth, is the preſage of every thing uſeful and honourable.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Duties, Studies, and Amuſements of Women of the firſt claſs in Society.

AMIDST the numerous reſources of talent and genius, thoſe who have been unhappily accuſtomed to habits of indolence, and a ſucceſſion of light amuſements, will languiſh, incapable of reliſhing the enjoyment they produce, or cultivating them with ſucceſs.

Man is a being endued with certain powers, which, if ſuffered to lie dormant, become torpid and uſeleſs; the energy of action alone can preſerve them in perfection; and one of theſe, which eſpecially requires exerciſe to maintain it in vigour, is the capacity of application. The habit

of

of uſing this faculty, which may be conſidered as the inſtrument of acquiring every branch of human knowledge, can ſeldom, without great reſolution and exertion, be gained after childhood is paſſed; how neceſſary then is it to enure the infant mind to the practice of daily and vigorous application! Labour is the price of knowledge, as indeed it is of every other valuable poſſeſſion which is placed within our attainment; neither health, nor the activity of the intellectual powers, nor even pleaſure itſelf can be enjoyed unleſs purchaſed by exertion. If ſuch be the conſtitution of our nature, let the ambition of women be directed to aſſert their claim to the characteriſtic mark of rational beings, and to riſe above the enervating habits of indolent

lent indulgence; let them ſtrengthen their bodies by exerciſe, and their minds by cultivation, till they acquire the full uſe of thoſe powers, which have been beſtowed upon them by a beneficent Creator, for the purpoſe of qualifying them to perform that part in the world, to which his providence has appointed them.

The different orders or conditions of mankind require the performance of duties, and the cultivation of talents, peculiar to each, beſides thoſe which are incumbent upon all. Reflection upon the ſubject will ſhew, that a conſiderable degree of intellectual improvement is neceſſary, for females of the ſuperior claſſes of ſociety, to capacitate them for the proper application of that influence, which is conferred on them by their

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ſituation, for the purpoſe of promoting the public welfare.

The indiſpenſable duties of wives, mothers, and heads of families, are incumbent upon all ranks; though it is not obligatory upon the perſons, who compoſe the claſs under conſideration, to execute every office belonging to theſe relations themſelves, yet it is incumbent on them to inſpect the whole; to regulate the plan of action; and to examine whether their ſubſtitutes diſcharge their reſpective engagements properly. As wives, the diſpoſal of that part of their huſband's revenue, which is conſumed by the family, falls under their direction, and they are required to prevent either the profuſion of waſte, or the unbecoming parſimony of want: As mothers, they are re-

ſponſible, eſpecially, for the religious and moral education of their children: As miſtreſſes, the regulation of the moral conduct of their female domeſtics devolves upon them, and is a charge which cannot be wholly tranſmitted to a houſe-keeper. Here is a wide field for action; but a much more extended one lies beyond it.

The female poor in their neighbourhood have undeniable claims upon them, not only for a liberal diſtribution of pecuniary aſſiſtance in caſes of ſickneſs or unavoidable diſtreſs, but alſo for a part of their time, proportioned to their leiſure. Without any impertinent interference with the excluſive departments of men, in the adminiſtration of parochial buſineſs, there are many important benefits which might be derived from the

co-operation of women of enlarged underſtandings, in the ſuperintendence of the poor of their own ſex. Delicacy, tenderneſs, practical ſkill in their concerns, and ſympathizing in their ſufferings, eminently qualify women for the taſk. The patronage and management of uſeful inſtitutions for the improvement of their morals, and the increaſe of their happineſs, the inſpection of workhouſes, ſchools of induſtry, and cottages, not merely once or twice in a twelvemonth, but ſo frequently as to become acquainted with the wants and condition of the inhabitants, would enable women of the higher claſſes to do much good, and to correct many abuſes, of which men are ſeldom competent judges; particularly with reſpect to the rearing of chil-

dren, and the preſervation of the morals of female pariſh apprentices. It is a fact too well atteſted to need farther evidence, that the lives of thouſands of infants have been loſt in poorhouſes, from neglect, ſeverity, and miſmanagement. Policy, as well as humanity, ſuggeſts the propriety of adopting ſome meaſure likely to check this enormous evil, and diminiſh ſuch a dreadful waſte of human life. An appointment of female viſitors, empowered to examine, and make report weekly or monthly, of the ſtate of the infants in the workhouſe, in each pariſh throughout the kingdom, might produce effectual reformation, and contribute to the general order of the reſt of the inmates of theſe houſes of affliction. The ſenſibility of the ſex does not admit

admit a doubt, but that there might be found a ſufficient number to relieve each other, in every pariſh, who would willingly overcome the difficulties of ſuch an undertaking, in the cauſe of theſe innocent ſufferers. Workhouſes, in their preſent ſtate, it muſt be acknowledged, are but too generally places of diſguſt and loathſomeneſs; but a conſtant recurrence of theſe viſits would moſt probably render them cleaner, and leſs offenſive to the feelings of humanity.

The apprentices bound out by a pariſh, and girls diſcharged from charity-ſchools at the very age when they moſt need the protection of a guardian, are objects of peculiar commiſeration: The former are frequently conſigned to the mercy of a maſter, who is either vicious or

cruel; in the one caſe, they fall innocent victims to his irregular paſſions; and in the other are ſubjected, with unreaſonable ſeverity, to taſks too hard to be performed. Was each girl apprenticed by a pariſh, to be placed under the inſpection of one or two of the moſt reſpectable female inhabitants, it would not only reſtrain the ill conduct of the maſter or miſtreſs, but likewiſe ſtimulate the child to behave herſelf ſo as to deſerve the future patronage of her ſuperiors. The care beſtowed upon girls in charity-ſchools of all deſcriptions, is of little avail, if they are diſmiſſed at a certain age, without creditable ſituations being provided for them. After ſeveral years of inſtruction, it is a common practice to abandon them wholly to the management

ment of their parents, who from being unable to maintain them, are glad to let them to the firſt place that offers, without the leaſt diſcrimination into the character of their employers. Would the patroneſſes of ſuch ſchools extend their benevolent care for the ſpace of a few more years, in tracing the children from place to place, and rewarding thoſe who deſerved it, by recommendation and ſome ſmall teſtimony of their approbation, it would complete the plan of bringing up ſuch children to be uſeful members of the community; and there is little doubt but the ſucceſs would be adequate to their hopes. The life of one infant, or the preſervation of one innocent girl from perdition, would be a recompence worth any trouble the attempt might incur.

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The reformation of vice, the inſtruction of ignorance, and the promotion of virtue, are among the moſt dignified occupations of the human intellect; but noble and intereſting as they are, they lie within the compaſs of female underſtanding, and if aſſiduouſly purſued, will fill up the vacancies of a life of leiſure, with honour, profit, and pleaſure. The example of the worthy Hanway in the diſpoſal of his time, deſerves imitation: He remarks, that he did not leave works of benevolence to accidental opportunity, but that he was accuſtomed to allot a ſpecific part of his time to the expreſs purpoſe. It is an admirable practice to divide the day into regular portions, appropriating them to their reſpective claims, in order that duties, ſtudies, and amuſe-

amuſements may each have their proportionate ſhare of attention, and not intrude upon one another.

The duties of an elevated rank are very extenſive, as has been already ſhewn, but if hours are properly œconomiſed they will not abſorb them all, but a ſufficient opportunity will be left for the cultivation of the intellectual faculties, and likewiſe for the enjoyment of temperate pleaſure.

After the performance of duties, the improvement of the mind holds the ſecond place. The taſte of individuals alone can direct the choice in ſelecting congenial objects from amongſt the innumerable ſcientific purſuits, which adorn, and add a luſtre to the moſt diſtinguiſhed ſituations. Whatever has a tendency to ſtrengthen the judgment, to enlarge the compaſs

paſs of the underſtanding, to impreſs juſt principles of action, and raiſe the mind to the contemplation of the wiſdom of the Creator, by an acquaintance with his works, deſerves a decided preference. The acquiſition of languages, ſimple mathematics, aſtronomy, natural and experimental philoſophy, with hiſtory and criticiſm, may be cultivated by the ſex with propriety and advantage, according to their different degrees of induſtry and perſeverance.

The lighter ſtudies, which muſt alſo depend upon taſte, may, not improperly, claſs amongſt amuſements. Here a variety of delightful objects preſent themſelves to the imagination, offered by the fine arts, and their innumerable elegant productions.

tions. Poetry, muſic, painting, and ſtatuary are ſources of the moſt refined entertainment; whether our admiration is excited by thoſe choice works of art, which are preſerved as exiſting records of the ſuperior proficiency of Greek and Italian artiſts; or whether we ſtudy the theory of thoſe principles by which they were guided to excellence. Should any one be deprived, by a natural deficiency of taſte, of enjoying the gratification theſe purſuits afford, there are others, productive of great variety and amuſement, which will probably be more conſonant to their turn of mind. A knowledge of the cuſtoms and manners of different nations, geography, chemiſtry, electricity, botany, an inveſtigation of the properties and habits of the ſeveral

veral orders of animals, gardening, turning, and works of ingenuity, may each in ſucceſſion fill up a leiſure opportunity with innocence and uſefulneſs, and become a pleaſing antidote to the indolent habit of loitering away time in an unprofitable manner, or what is worſe in diſſipation; and ſhould theſe recreations encroach upon the vigils of the card-table, the injury to ſociety will not be great.

Without inſtituting an inquiry into the propriety of this diverſion, or enumerating the evils which frequently attend its exceſs, it may appear only conſiſtent with a work, written expreſsly upon the importance of uſeful employment, to remark the conſumption of time expended in it, which may fairly be calculated at one eighth of the day

of

of the majority of the female ſex above thirty, who compoſe what is termed the genteel world. But to return from this digreſſion, to the ſubject of pleaſures and amuſements; a ſubject upon which there is great diverſity of opinions, according to prejudice, habit, and education.

The love of pleaſure is a dangerous propenſity, and ſhould be reſtricted within very moderate limits. Its purſuit may be rendered abſolutely unlawful in two ways, both as it reſpects the kind, and the quantity; the criterion of expediency in the firſt caſe conſiſts in its perfect innocency; thoſe things which are likely to corrupt the purity of the mind, and the affections, are at leaſt dangerous, and cannot be authorized by faſhion or example; for it is more than pro-

bable,

bable, that ſhe who ventures upon the confines of vice, will not eſcape uninjured. An extreme diſſipation is one of the characteriſtic vices of the preſent times; great vigilance, therefore, is neceſſary in high life to reſtrain its exceſs: whatever injures the health, intrudes upon more important avocations, or incurs an immoderate expence, well deſerves the appellation of exceſſive and unjuſtifiable. Judged by theſe rules, a frequent attendance upon places of public diverſion will ſtand condemned; and in whatever point of view it is examined, it will be found wholly incompatible with that purity of character, which is the eſſence of female perfection. The incontrovertible oppoſition between what is denominated a life of pleaſure, and one of religion,

religion, and habits of moral virtue, has been ſo often, and ſo ably proved by the moſt reſpectable authors, eſpecially by thoſe who have written particularly for the female ſex, that it ſeems unneceſſary to enter into a diſcuſſion of it here. But there is another motive for ſubjecting the inordinate purſuit of pleaſure within the bounds of moderation, which, though likely to prevail with a mind truly magnanimous and patriotic, has not been ſo often urged, and is peculiarly incumbent upon thoſe, whoſe elevated ſphere of action gives an impreſſive force to their example. Women are prohibited from the public ſervice of their country by reaſon and decorum, but they are not excluded from promoting its welfare by other means, better

adapted

adapted to their powers and attainments. The gradual and almoſt imperceptible, though certain influence of forming the opinions, and improving the manners of their countrywomen, by their converſation and their practice, is the undiſputed prerogative of our female nobility. Should one of that order, inſtead of yielding to the torrent of faſhion, uſe the influence of her rank, to check the increaſing and pernicious ſpirit of diſſipation; ſhould ſhe avail herſelf of the weight of her own example, to promote a ſobriety of conduct, and the general uſefulneſs of her ſex, the good effects it might produce upon ſociety, would extend beyond her warmeſt expectations: The benefit would indeed be incalculable: Many of thoſe who are her

equals

equals by birth, would be induced to imitate ſo noble a model of true greatneſs of mind; and experience proves that their inferiors will follow wherever they lead.—The civic crown was the reward of any Roman who preſerved the life of a fellow-citizen; but how much more worthy of the gratitude of the community would ſhe be, who unſubdued by the temptations offered by affluence and high birth, ſhould reject them with an heroic magnanimity, and devote her time, her talents, and her fortune, to the improvement of public morals, and the increaſe of public happineſs.

The employments already ſuggeſted remove every complaint of a deficiency of materials for the exerciſe of the faculties or the fancy.

and leave no room for vapoured idleneſs to lament the tedioufneſs of time. Whilſt to greatneſs is annexed the privilege of forming and patronizing inſtitutions of utility to reward genius, to raiſe and to protect modeſt worth, languiſhing in obſcurity, to encourage manufactures, to countenance, in an eſpecial manner, the induſtry of their own ſex, in every department in which they can be employed, and to uſe the moſt ſtrenuous efforts to remove thoſe prejudices, which have a tendency to continue women in a ſtate of ignorance, diſſipated ſloth, inactivity, and helpleſs dependance.

CHAPTER V.

On the Duties, Studies, and Amuſements of Women of the ſecond claſs in Society.

THE virtues, purſuits, and amuſements of a diſtinguiſhed condition, partake of the publicity of that ſtation; thoſe of a contracted ſphere, are leſs expoſed to obſervation; but as they contribute to increaſe or to diminiſh the ſum of general happineſs, they ſhould alſo be regulated upon principles of reaſon, inſtead of being abandoned to the direction of accidental impreſſions.

As it is not to be ſuppoſed, that many individuals of that order of women, who claſs next in rank and conſequence to the one already diſcuſſed, draw their reſources from

hereditary poſſeſſions, the contingency of ſupply is more uncertain, and implicates a greater probability of a change in circumſtances; on which account, the exerciſing a well-ordered œconomy, and of acquiring the art of managing the expenditure of the income in the moſt advantageous manner is apparent, and generally devolves upon the female partner, whoſe acquirements in youth ſhould therefore be directed to objects of utility, in preference to thoſe which are merely ornamental.

Domeſtic duties ſtand diſtinguiſhed as pre-eminently uſeful; a moderate ſituation requires that they ſhould be diſcharged in perſon, an avocation which cannot be judiciouſly performed, without conſiderable knowledge and attention. The

art of œconomiſing and rendering all kinds of food as palatable and nouriſhing as poſſible, by different modes of cookery, will repay the miſtreſs of a houſhold for the trouble of inveſtigation, and ſhould indiſputably form a part of the regular inſtruction of girls of the middle rank, to which, as they advance towards maturity, may profitably be added a knowledge of the value of all neceſſary artieles conſumed in a family, whether for the table or the wardrobe, as well as the quantities of each which are requiſite for reſpective uſes. As theory is of little avail, unleſs exemplified by practice, they ſhould be habituated to exerciſe the department of houſe-keeper under the inſpection of their mother, not only by purchaſing the different

commodities wanted for the uſe of the family, but likewiſe by keeping an exact account of the domeſtic expences, which will afford opportunities of teaching them a judicious application of money, and giving them diſtinct ideas, where frugality may moſt properly be exerted, and where greater latitude may be allowed. Neither will ſome information concerning the uſe of domeſtic medicine, or kitchen phyſic, as it is called, be without its advantage, as well as ſkill in preparing broths and other things for the ſick; nor ſhould the management of a ſick chamber, to the attendance of which women are ſo often called, be left to the uncertainty of inexperience; girls ſhould be initiated in the beſt methods of alleviating the ſufferings, and contri-

buting to the comfort of thoſe who are indiſpoſed.

Where there are younger children in the ſame family, the inviting opportunity of inſtructing them in the moſt rational ſyſtem of bringing up infants ſhould not be neglected; for what can be more ridiculous, and at the ſame time more common, than to ſee a young woman become a mother, who ſcarcely knows how to handle a baby, and who would be alarmed at the thoughts of dreſſing one. Inſtruction and previous experience, are thought abſolutely neceſſary to qualify us for the diſcharge of almoſt every office, except that of the parental character; but, alas! the duties of this very important relation, the conſequences of which extend even to a future generation,

are left to be diſcovered by aceident, as the occaſions for performing them ariſe.

The functions of domeſtic life occupy a conſiderable portion of time, even under the regulation of the moſt methodical arrangement, but as they are of indiſpenſable obligation, the hours they conſume need not be regretted: Order, preciſion, and a thorough knowledge of the different family concerns, will however expedite the accompliſhment of this eſſential buſineſs, and leave ſufficient opportunity for other avocations. The only ſatisfactory apology which can be made for tranſferring the management of children, or the cares of the houſhold, to others, is a devotion of that time, which would otherwiſe be their due, to

ſome

ſome means of procuring reſources to maintain them. But even when the miſtreſs of a family is thus profitably engaged, every domeſtic department ſhould be regulated by her orders, and be conducted under her inſpection: The eye of a judicious manager pervades every object, and at a glance regulates the whole; eſpecially if her ſervants be upright and well-intentioned, and ſhe have learnt the happy art of winning their affections: For a ready obedience is the fruit of attachment, and is the axis upon which the order of a family principally turns.

There are many lines of buſineſs in which a wife is capable of aſſiſting her huſband, and wherever a man follows an occupation that can poſſibly be tranſacted by a woman, it is a pre-

a precaution of prudence, againſt the accident of his death, to inſtruct his wife in the ſecrets of his profeſſion; even ſhould the eaſe of his circumſtances preclude the neceſſity of her taking an active part in it during his life. Some men may probably diſpute the propriety of making their wives too well acquainted with their affairs, they may ſuppoſe, that it will tend to make them arrogant and preſuming with regard to expence; or they may be unwilling to confide to their prudence, the knowledge of private concerns unfit for general communication. The plain anſwer to theſe cavils is, that men ſhould not marry women who are unworthy of their confidence; and that in a well-founded marriage, intereſt is indiviſible;

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that alſo, from the ſuperior purity of the morals of women, and the exquiſite tenderneſs of mothers for their offspring, as well as from the timidity of the female character, there is great reaſon to believe, that many families might have been reſcued from ruin, had the boldneſs of ſpeculation, or the imprudence of adventure in the huſband, been reſtrained by the temperate views of the wife. But, above all, the improvement that is daily gaining ground in the education of women, authorizes a preſumption that they will gradually become adapted to ſerious occupations, and that as they advance in uſeful knowledge, and the exerciſe of their reaſoning powers, they will obtain a more implicit confidence from their huſbands, and will be re-

garded by them as the friend of their boſoms, rather than as the mere companion of their hours of recreation. Another general argument may ſtill be urged to remove the jealous apprehenſion of men, leſt, that by teaching women too much, and by rendering them too uſeful, they ſhould become independent of them: That as a more rational education prevails, women will be better acquainted with their relative ſituation, and as their ideas are more defined, they will perceive, that there can be but one head or chief in every family; nature and reaſon, as well as cuſtom, have eſtabliſhed this power in the hands of the men; therefore, ſo far from puffing them up, and making them ſelf-willed or preſumptuous, an increaſe of real knowledge will

will conduce to give them a juſt eſtimate of what they owe to themſelves, and what is due to their huſbands; it will not teach them a ſervile unqualified obedience, ſuch as can only be obſerved by ſlaves, for that is an abſurdity in a connection which involves the mutual happineſs of two perſons, but it will promote a diffidence of their own judgment in concerns of moment, and an habitual reference, on ſuch occaſions, to the more enlarged experience of mankind in their huſbands. Thus the effects of an enlightened underſtanding, will be found directly contrary to thoſe which are ſuppoſed to ariſe from it by a narrow policy.

There are other employments which may laudably occupy that time, which can be ſpared from the important

important engagements of domeſtic duties, among which the active offices of benevolence demand a precedence; for women of the ſecond claſs are not exonerated from uſing every means that their ſituation affords, of relieving the miſeries of thoſe who are placed in a ſtate of poverty, from the obligation incumbent upon the firſt, of taking the lead in the promotion and ſuperintendence of charitable inſtitutions. Neither will mediocrity of circumſtances be an adequate apology for the neglect of this duty: a little money well applied, goes a great way in alleviating the diſtreſſes of the indigent; beſides, pecuniary aid is not the only aſſiſtance, nor always the beſt that may be extended to them. Time and perſonal exertion, are in many

many caſes more powerful agents for relieving their ſufferings. Numberleſs are the modes by which the well-informed may contribute to the comfort and aſſiſtance of thoſe, who have no fixed principles of action. In addition to the religious and moral inſtruction of the poor, advice may be valuable to them, in teaching them how to cut out their clothes; to give the beſt reliſh to their homely fare; to apply ſimple medicines to the ſick; to regulate the diſpoſal of their ſmall pittance to the beſt advantage; to procure an increaſe of comfort, by a greater degree of cleanlineſs, order, and good management. To advice may be united conſolation, and the expreſſion of that tender ſympathy, which binds man to man, from a partici-

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pation of the ſame nature; and would, if the voice of humanity were not ſtifled by indolence, avarice, and pride, cement the whole human race into one brotherhood.

But the miſtreſs of a family may alſo find many opportunities of exerciſing theſe affections, in the inſtruction of her ſervants and dependants, in all the branches of uſeful knowledge that are adapted to their ſtation: the promotion of our own intereſt, if duly conſidered, as well as a ſolicitude for their welfare, ſhould be an inducement to improve them in whatever will enable them to perform the functions of their ſituation with more propriety and effect; ignorance, rather than ill-intention, is the frequent cauſe of their faults; they are careleſs, waſteful, irregular, and

and imperfect in almoſt every thing they do, from want of information, and habits of order in their childhood; upon which account there are few ſervices, that can be rendered to the public, by a private individual of our ſex, more beneficial than that of taking a poor child into her family, and forming her into a uſeful ſervant, at the age when they are commonly diſcharged from charity ſchools, and expoſed to all the evils of bad example at home, or the unfavourable impreſſions of a low place. The perſons who are beſt ſuited to engage in this benevolent attempt, are thoſe whoſe unincumbered ſituation gives them opportunity to devote a conſiderable portion of leiſure to the execution of it: in order to ſucceed, they ſhould re-

member, that the object of their engaging in it, is not merely their own accommodation, but alſo to ſerve the child they have patronized, and to fulfil a part of that obligation to do good, which is enforced upon all by the doctrines of chriſtianity. Founded upon ſuch principles, diſcipline will be tempered with patience, and they will not grow weary of the taſk before it is completed. How effectually would ſuch perſons perfect the deſign of the patrons of ſchools of induſtry, whoſe work requires to be continued under another form, till the children they have reſcued from ignorance have attained maturity.

Living examples are not wanting to encourage activity in the cauſe of humanity, for the preſent age abounds

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in excellent characters, eſpecially of the female ſex, who have contributed very conſiderably to the civilization of the poor. The uſeful works of Mrs. Trimmer; the ingenious deſign of Miſs Hannah More, in the publication of the cheap repoſitory for the diffuſion of religious and civil knowledge; and the repoſitory for fine works, contrived by the delicate ſenſibility of the honourble Mrs. Cooper, as a mart for the ſale of the labours of thoſe, whom a ſenſe of former proſperity, conceals from the eye of obſervation *, are

* The repoſitory for fine works, is an inſtitution for the reception and diſpoſal of any production, from a pair of knit garters, to the moſt elegant works of ingenuity. The price of each article, and a number, are affixed to it, by which the name of the owner is concealed. This eſtabliſh-

are teſtimonies of the capacity of women, to convert that leiſure, which is ſo commonly devoted to mere amuſement, to purpoſes of real utility, without derogating from that purity and decorum, which peculiarly characterize the ſex.

The education of the girls belonging to this claſs eſpecially, would anſwer the purpoſes of life more effectually, were their attention confined to a ſmaller compaſs of attainments, which ſhould be taught ſcientifically, and application to them continued, until a perfect knowledge of them is obtained. It is a too general error in female inſtruction, to aim

ment deſerves the patronage of the public, both on account of the utility of its deſign, and the variety and taſte diſplayed in the articles to be ſeen there.—The ſhop is at No. 22, Haymarket.

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at the acquiſition of numerous accompliſhments, without ever becoming an adept in any one; to which cauſe may partly be attributed the helpleſs and lamentable ſituation of women, when the ſmiles of proſperity are withdrawn, and they are left to ſtruggle with the diſtreſſing, and, as things now ſtand, the almoſt impracticable neceſſity of procuring for themſelves a ſubſiſtence.

In forming a ſyſtem of inſtruction for the daughters of perſons in the middle rank, a ſelection ſhould be made of thoſe ſtudies, which require the ſmalleſt conſumption of time, and which are likely to contribute to uſefulneſs, tending rather to repreſs, than to encourage, propenſities towards diſſipation and extravagance, exerciſing the rational faculties, and pre-

paring them to be capable of defining the duties required of them in the various allotments of their future lives: without preſuming to enumerate or limit the peculiar arts and ſciences ſuitable for them to learn, there are ſome, which from their eminent utility deſerve to be recommended. A grammatical knowledge of the Engliſh language, and an intimate acquaintance with the beſt authors, who have excelled in hiſtory, biography, poetry, and morality, are indiſpenſable. Simple mathematics are ſo advantageous, in accuſtoming the mind to method both in reaſoning and practice, that it is to be greatly deſired that they more generally compoſed a part of female education; arithmetic eſpecially, and the knowledge of book-

keeping, ſhould be taught fundamentally, as the means of contributing to the ſucceſs of any buſineſs, undertaken in caſe of neceſſity.—Drawing, not merely for the purpoſe of making pleaſing pictures, and obtaining applauſe, but for that capacity it gives to a proficient of repreſenting any object with eaſe and accuracy, is both an uſeful and amuſing qualification; nor are its good effects confined to the exerciſe of the art alone, it ſtrengthens the habit of obſervation, and facilitates the acquiſition of natural hiſtory, which is a ſtudy at once delightful and valuable; and it promotes a reverential admiration of the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Great Firſt Cauſe.

The diverſions of this order ſhould partake of the moderation of their

rank, and be reſtrained by a limited application of time and expence; the mind certainly requires relaxation, but judgment ſhould be uſed in the choice of ſuch amuſements as are conſiſtent with our ſituation: the poignancy of enjoyment, is not meaſured by the coſtlineſs of the object which produces it. The pleaſures of ſelect ſociety afford an innocent and delightful reſource from more ſerious occupation, and very deſirably fill up many of the chaſms which ariſe, even in a buſy life: converſation ſharpens the underſtanding, and may be modelled into one of the moſt agreeable vehicles of inſtruction. Books are the beſt ſubſtitutes for the charms of ſociety; they amuſe the imagination, and enrich the mind with knowledge, when

company

company cannot be collected: to thoſe who love reading, a rational amuſement is never wanting; for, amidſt the diverſified talents of Engliſh writers, from Milton to Peter Pindar, every taſte may find congenial entertainment. Innumerable are the purſuits, to which a mind liberally inſtructed, may recur for the indulgence of fancy, or the more ſerious employment of the intellectual powers. Nature preſents a rich harveſt to thoſe, who know how to eſtimate her pure pleaſures: the contemplation of her productions, from the moſt lowly plant to the magnificent luminary that enlightens our ſphere, ſupplies a never-failing ſtore of entertainment, unmixed with the pangs of ſelf-reproach, or the bitterneſs of repentance. Opportunities

will

will occur when the mind may be ſuffered to unbend, and yield to the invitations of pleaſure unmixed with improvement; but theſe recreations ſhould not return too often, leſt indulgence ſhould create a zeal for diſſipation, not eaſily extinguiſhed, and weaken the inclination for thoſe purſuits, which have a ſuperior claim to attention.

The choice of amuſements is a teſt, which will always diſtinguiſh a ſolid from a ſuperficial underſtanding; for thoſe pleaſures which have no other merit, than that of paſſing away time harmleſsly, may pleaſe the unreflecting; but will not ſatisfy minds of a higher order, who ſeek for ſomething more productive, even in theſe hours devoted to relaxation.

CHAPTER VI.

Lucrative Employments for the firſt and ſecond claſſes ſuggeſted, recommending as agreeable means of procuring a reſpectable ſupport,—Literature.—Paintings; Hiſtoric, Portrait, and Miniature.—Engraving.—Statuary.—Modelling.—Muſic.—Landſcape.—Gardening.—With Strictures on a Theatrical Life.

TRANSITIONS in private life from affluence to poverty, like the fable pageantry of death, from their frequency, produce no laſting impreſſions upon the beholders. Unexpected misfortunes befal an acquaintance, who has been careſſed in the days of proſperity; the change is lamented, and ſhe is conſoled by the viſits of her friends, in the firſt moments of affliction: ſhe ſinks gradually into wretchedneſs; ſhe becomes

comes obſcure, and is forgotten. The caſe would be different, could avocations be ſuggeſted, which would enable theſe, who ſuffer ſuch a reverſe of fortune, to maintain a decent appearance, and procure them a degree of reſpect. It is far from my preſent deſign, to point out all the various purſuits which may conſiſtently engage the talents, or employ the induſtry of women, whoſe refinement of manners unfit them for any occupation of a ſordid menial kind; ſuch an undertaking would require an extenſive acquaintance with the diſtinct branches of the fine arts, which adorn, and of the numerous manufactures which enrich, this country. But a few remarks upon the nature of thoſe employments, which are beſt adapted to the higher claſſes

of

of the ſex, when reduced to neceſſitous circumſtances, may, perhaps, afford uſeful hints to thoſe, who are languiſhing under the preſſure of misfortune, and induce abler pens to treat a ſubject hitherto greatly neglected.

Numerous difficulties ariſe in the choice of occupations for the purpoſe. They muſt be ſuch as are neither laborious nor ſervile, and they muſt of courſe be productive, without requiring a capital.

For theſe reaſons, purſuits which require the exerciſe of intellectual, rather than bodily powers, are generally the moſt eligible.

Literature affords a reſpectable and pleaſing employment, for thoſe who poſſeſs talents, and an adequate degree of mental cultivation. For although

although the emolument is precarious, and ſeldom equal to a maintenance, yet if the attempt be tolerably ſucceſsful, it may yield a comfortable aſſiſtance in narrow circumſtances, and beguile many hours, which might otherwiſe be paſſed in ſolitude or unavailing regret. The fine arts offer a mode of ſubſiſtence, congenial to the delicacy of the moſt refined minds, and they are peculiarly adapted by their elegance, to the gratification of taſte. The perfection of every ſpecies of painting is attainable by women, from the repreſentation of hiſtoric facts, to the minute execution of the miniature portrait, if they will beſtow ſufficient time and application for the acquiſition of the principles of the art, in the ſtudy of thoſe models, which have been the means of tranſmitting the names and character

racter of ſo many men, to the admiration of poſterity. The ſucceſsful exerciſe of this imitative art requires invention, taſte and judgment: in the two firſt, the ſex are allowed to excel, and the laſt may be obtained by a perſeverance in examining, comparing, and reflecting upon the works of thoſe maſters, who have copied nature in her moſt graceful forms.

Compared with the numbers of the other ſex, it does not appear that many females, either in ancient or modern times, have rendered themſelves celebrated in this line of excellence; but the cauſe of this diſproportion may ſurely, with greater probability, be attributed to its having been attempted by ſo few women, than to incapacity; among the very

very ſmall number of female artiſts, who have practiſed painting as a profeſſion, there have not been wanting ſome inſtances of rare merit. But it is to the genial influence of education only, that ſociety muſt ſtand indebted for the frequent recurrence of ſuch examples: rare, indeed, is that genius which overcomes all obſtacles; too often do the powers of the mind, like the undiſcovered diamond in the mine, lie dormant, if they be not called forth by a propitious combination of circumſtances. As it is not cuſtomary for girls to ſtudy the art of painting, with a view to adopt it as a profeſſion, it is impoſſible to aſcrrtain the extent of their capacity for the pencil; but certainly there appears no natural deficiency, either mental or corporeal,

corporeal, to prevent them from becoming proficients in that art, were the bent of their education favourable to the attempt. It muſt be allowed, that within the laſt twenty years, it has been a general faſhion for young ladies to learn to draw, and that it is not unuſual to ſee performances executed in ſuch a manner as to excite a reaſonable expectation that their powers, if properly cultivated, would produce teſtimonials of no inferior ability. But as the view of the generality is only elegant amuſement, they do not endeavour to attain any degree of excellence, beyond that of copying prints or drawings; original deſign is too arduous, and it is conceived that the qualifications it requires, would engroſs too large a portion of time.

They neither read thoſe books which treat of the ſubject in a ſcientific manner; they do not aſſociate with thoſe perſons, whoſe converſation is adapted to form their taſte, nor have they an opportunity of imbibing the enthuſiaſm, which is produced by the contemplation of the precious models of antiquity. No ſurpriſe can therefore be excited, that thoſe fruits are not viſible, which are the effects of ſuch neceſſary preparation.

But as neither exalted genius, nor the means of cultivating that portion of it which nature has beſtowed, to the utmoſt extent, are likely to be very generally poſſeſſed; it is fortunate for thoſe who are leſs liberally endowed, that there are many profitable, though inferior branches of de-

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ſign, or of arts connected with it. The drapery and landſcape both of portraits and hiſtorical pieces, are often entruſted to the pupils of the maſter, and conſtitute a branch of the art, for which women might be allowed to be candidates. The elegant as well as the humorous deſigns which embelliſh the windows of print-ſellers, &c. alſo ſketches for the frontiſpieces of books, and other ornaments of the ſame kind, muſt employ many artiſts, nor does it appear that any good reaſon for confining them to one ſex has been aſſigned.

Colouring of prints is a lucrative employment; there was a few years ago in London, a French woman, who had a peculiar method of applying water colours to prints, by which ſhe might have gained a very

liberal income, had her induſtry and morals been equal to her ingenuity. Deſigns for needle-work, and ornamental works of all kinds, are now moſtly performed by men, and thoſe who have a good taſte, obtain a great deal of money by them; but ſurely this employment is one, among many, which has been improperly aſſumed by the other ſex, and ſhould be appropriated to women. The delicate touches of miniature painting, and painting in enamel, with devices for rings and lockets in hair-work, are more characteriſtic of female talents than of maſculine powers. The delineation of animals or plants for books of natural hiſtory, and colouring of maps or globes may be followed with ſome advantage. Patterns for calico-printers and paper-

ſtainers are lower departments of the ſame art, which might ſurely be allowed as ſources of ſubſiſtence to one ſex with equal propriety as to the other.

Engraving, though it differ from painting in the execution, may be ſaid to have the ſame origin, both being regulated by ſimilar principles, as far as relates to deſign and ſhadow; therefore, if the faculties of women are capable of directing the pencil, there can be no apprehenſion that they are not alſo equal to guide the graver with the ſame ſucceſs.

Statuary and modelling are arts with which I am too little acquainted to hazard any opinion concerning, but the productions of the honourable Mrs. Damer, and a few others, authorize an aſſurance, that

women have only to apply their talents to them in order to excel. If the reſiſtance of marble and hard ſubſtances be too powerful for them to ſubdue, wax and other materials of a ſofter nature, will eaſily yield to their impreſſions. The neceſſity of vigour and perſeverance in cultivating natural talents, is equally great in attaining perfection of any kind. The ſame remarks which have been made upon that ſubject, with reſpect to painting, are equally applicable to muſic. Compoſition affords an ample ſupport to many profeſſors, and depends rather upon a fine taſte, and a theoretic knowledge of the powers of harmony, more than upon a deep underſtanding or philoſophical reſearch. The names of celebrated female compoſers are probably ſtill

more

more rare than thoſe of female paint-ers; for the ſcarcity of the latter we have already endeavoured to account, and ſimilar reaſons may be aſſigned for the former.

The ſtage is a profeſſion, to which many women of refined manners, and a literary turn of mind have had recourſe. Since it has been cuſto-mary for females to aſſume dramatic characters, there appears to have been full as great a proportion of women, who have attained celebrity, among thoſe who have devoted themſelves to a theatrical life, as of the other ſex; a fact which argues that there is no inequality of genius, in the ſexes, for the imitative arts; the obſervation may operate as a ſtimulant to women to thoſe purſuits which are leſs objectionable than the

ſtage; which is not mentioned for the purpoſe of recommending it, but of proving that the abilities of the female ſex are equal to nobler labours than are uſually undertaken by women. The profeſſion of an actreſs is indeed moſt unſuitable to the ſex in every point of view, whether it be conſidered with reſpect to the courage requiſite to face an audience, or the variety of ſituations incident to it, which expoſe moral virtue to the moſt ſevere trials. Let the daughters of a happier deſtiny, whilſt they lament the evils to which ſome of their ſex are expoſed, remember thoſe unpropitious circumſtances, that have caſt them into a line of life, in which it is ſcarcely poſſible to preſerve that purity of ſentiment and conduct, which characterizes female excel-

excellence. When their errors are diſcuſſed, let the harſh voice of cenſure be reſtrained, by the reflection, that ſhe who has made the greateſt advances towards perfection, might have fallen, had ſhe been ſurrounded by the ſame influences.

That ſpecies of agriculture which depends upon ſkill in the management of the nurſery-ground, in rearing the various kinds of ſhrubs and flowers, for the ſupply of gentlemen's gardens and pleaſure grounds, would ſupply an elegant means of ſupport to thoſe women who are able to raiſe a capital for carrying on a work of that magnitude. Ornamental gardening, and the laying out of pleaſure grounds and parks, with the improvement of natural landſcape, one of the refinements of modern

times,

times, may likewiſe afford an eligible maintenance to ſome of thoſe females, who in the days of their proſperity, diſplayed their taſte in the embelliſhment of their own domains.

The preſiding over ſeminaries for female education, is likewiſe a ſuitable employment for thoſe, whoſe minds have been enlarged by liberal cultivation, whilſt the under parts of that profeſſion may be more ſuitably filled by perſons whoſe early views have been contracted within narrower limits. After all that can be ſuggeſted by general remarks, the different circumſtances of individuals muſt decide the profeſſion moſt convenient to them. But it is a conſolatory reflection, that amidſt the daily viciſſi-

viciſſitudes of human life, from which no rank is exempt, there are reſources, from which aid may be drawn, without derogating from the true dignity of a rational being.

CHAPTER VII.

On the duties, attainments, and employments of Women of the third Claſs.—Cenſuring the giving of greater rewards to Men than Women, for ſimilar exertions of time, labour, and ingenuity; and the neceſſity there is for ladies of rank encouraging their own ſex.—Recommending the teaching girls, the ſerving of retail ſhops; the undertaking for the female ſex; turnery, and farming, as eligible means of ſupport; with an extract from Sir F. M. Eden, of an account of a Female Farmer.

THE next claſs of women which comes under animadverſion, includes ſeveral gradations, involving the daughters of every ſpecies of tradeſmen below the merchant, and above the meaner mechanic: conſequently, very different degrees of refinement befit

befit the individuals who form the extreme links, which are ſeparated, inſenſibly as it were, from the other diviſions towards which they approximate. The peculiar duties of each, will vary according to their reſpective ſituations; but humility, ſobriety, modeſty of deportment, an induſtrious diſpoſition, and an adjuſtment of their manners to their circumſtances, are the characteriſtic ornaments of their general condition.

The ſame cauſe, whence originates a variation in the functions which they are called to fulfil, will alſo require different modifications in their inſtruction; but in a ſketch upon ſuch a ſubject, as a mere outline only can be drawn, which may be adapted to the majority of the perſons for whom it is deſigned, particular diſtinctions

tinctions muſt be left to the judgment of parents, who ſhould be guided by the proſpect of the probable future deſtination of their offſpring.

Reading fluently, and ſpelling correctly will form a ſufficient knowledge of the Engliſh language; and as their avocations will not admit of an extenſive courſe of reading, the books ſelected for them ſhould be ſuch as are addreſſed to the underſtanding, rather than to the imagination. A complete acquaintance with the practical parts of ſcripture is eſſentially neceſſary, and ſhould be taught them daily, as leſſons for the conduct of life*. Plays and novels, with every work

* The following books are ſuitable to form a part of the library of young women, who have but little leiſure to devote to reading:

Trimmer's

work tending to inflame the paſſions, and implant ſentiments of the omnipotence of love and beauty, ſhould be moſt carefully excluded from their ſight, AS CONTAINING A BANEFUL POISON, DESTRUCTIVE OF EVERY PRINCIPLE THAT IS ADAPTED TO DEFEND THEM FROM THE ALLUREMENTS OF VICE. The relative ſi-

Trimmer's Bible, with Annotations and Reflections.
Œconomy of Human Life.
Penn's Reflections and Maxims.
Hanway's Virtue in Humble Life.
Sturm's Reflections for every Day in the Year.
Barbauld's Hymns.
Watts's Poems.
A Collection of Poems for young Perſons, by Rachel Barclay.
Aikin's England delineated.
Robinſon Cruſoe.
Trimmer's Family Magazine.
Trimmer's Servant's Friend, and two Farmers.
Hannah More's Repoſitory.

tuation

tuation of the four continents, and the kingdoms which they contain; the principal cities, rivers, and mountains of Europe, with the manners of the different nations, and the produce of each, both natural and artificial, and a more accurate knowledge of the diviſions and chief towns of our own iſland, would form a ſtudy, at once uſeful, entertaining, and unobjectionable. A general acquaintance with the leading events of Engliſh hiſtory, collected from ſome well-written compendium, might alſo be admitted as an occaſional recreation from buſineſs.

Uſeful needlework in every branch, with complete ſkill in cutting out and making every article of female dreſs, ſhould be a principal object in their inſtruction, and ought to em-

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ploy a conſiderable part of the day in childhood. Arithmetic is a ſcience of ſuch general application in the concerns of every rank, that it ſhould be learnt by all univerſally, who are above the claſs of labourers; the want of a thorough acquaintance with figures, and a methodical ſyſtem of book-keeping, have conduced to the ruin of many ſmall tradeſmen; and as ſuch knowledge is more likely to give exact than refined ideas, no dangerous conſequences need be apprehended from it; nor would there be ground for alarm to thoſe who are apprehenſive of beſtowing too much learning upon the inferior ranks, if the inſtruction of thoſe above penury was extended to the ſimpleſt elements of geometry, for it is to be preſumed, that the effect of this ac-

quiſition would rather qualify than unfit them for the duties of their ſtation. The objects concerning which theſe ſiſter ſciences treat, being confined to the underſtanding, they poſſeſs nothing in their nature encouraging to perſonal vanity, or to that falſe pride, which often excites one order of men to tread too cloſely upon the footſteps of that above them: the knowledge of things that are in themſelves uſeful, can only be injurious when it has a tendency to break down the diſtinctions of ſociety, by arouſing a paſſion for ſcience in the boſoms of individuals of a certain condition, which can ſeldom be gratified but at the expence of their welfare in life.

A compariſon of this ſyſtem of education with that in frequent uſe among

among perſons of this deſcription, may effectually remove the prejudices of thoſe, who conſider the one propoſed as too liberal for the women for whom it is deſigned. On the one hand appears plain inſtruction in a plain garb, reading, ſpelling, writing, arithmetic, geometry, uſeful books, and family needle-work; on the other appear polite manners, a ſmattering of French and dancing, to which is ſometimes added muſic, embroidery, and fine works. From this picture let the moſt adverſe to their improvement decide, which is beſt calculated to enable them to diſcharge the duties of their ſtation.

Civilization would be advanced, by beſtowing ſuch a rational mode of education upon this order of the ſex, as ſhall teach them juſt notions of their

duties and offices, and of the proper place they hold in ſociety. Ignorance, and a vague manner of thinking, are the ſprings of many errors in conduct among them, which are increaſed by pernicious publications, containing improbable fictions, dreſſed up in the imagery of glowing language, filled with falſe ſentiments of delicacy and ſenſibility, and preſenting models of female perfection unfit for their imitation; for nothing can be more diſtant from the plain, ſober, uſeful qualities of a houſewife, than the excellencies of the heroine of a novel. Errors of opinion are of all kinds the moſt dangerous, as they lead to improper conduct, even when the intentions are upright; whilſt the modeſt virtues of induſtry, frugality, and ſimplicity of behaviour, are regarded

with contempt, in vain will the practice of them be enforced. The refinement of manners and extravagant appearance of young women of ſmall expectations is a diſcouragement to marriage; for what prudent tradeſman would venture to burthen himſelf with a wife, who, by her miſtaken ambition of gentility, would conſume all the produce of his induſtry, without contributing her endeavours to increaſe the common ſtock. Celibacy, among the inferior ranks eſpecially, is a political evil of ſuch magnitude, as to require every check that wiſdom can ſuggeſt; for whether conſidered with reference to individual happineſs and virtue, or the general good, its conſequences are fatal. The frequency of marriage is beſt promoted by rendering it deſir-

able: what can be ſo likely to effect that purpoſe, as the bringing up girls with ſuch habits as will fit them for helpmates.

The knowledge of a trade is a probable means, which ought not to be neglected, of enabling them to give their aſſiſtance towards the ſupport of their family; but ſhould it be more eligible for the huſband and the wife to unite in the proſecution of the ſame deſign, her former ſubjection to regular application will render her more apt in accommodating herſelf to her huſband's buſineſs. Thus the benefit of apprenticing girls of this rank to ſome trade is equally apparent, whether they marry or live ſingle.

Men monopolize not only the moſt advantageous employments, and ſuch

as exclude women from the exerciſe of them, by the publicity of their nature, or the extenſive knowledge they require, but even many of thoſe, which are conſiſtent with the female character. Another heavy diſcouragement to the induſtry ot women, is the inequality of the reward of their labour, compared with that of men, an injuſtice which pervades every ſpecies of employment performed by both ſexes *.

* This abuſe is in no inſtance more conſpicuous, than in the wages of domeſtic ſervants. A footman, eſpecially of the higher kind, whoſe moſt laborious taſk is to wait at table, gains, including clothes, vails, and other perquiſites, at leaſt £. 50 per annum, whilſt a cook-maid, who is miſtreſs of her profeſſion, does not obtain £. 20, though her office is laborious, unwholeſome, and requires a much greater degree of ſkill than that of a valet. A ſimilar diſproportion is obſervable among the inferior ſervants of the eſtabliſhment.

In employments which depend upon bodily ſtrength the diſtinction is juſt; for it cannot be pretended that the generality of women can earn as much as men, where the produce of their labour is the reſult of corporeal exertion; but it is a ſubject of great regret, that this inequality ſhould prevail, even where an equal ſhare of ſkill and application are exerted. Male-ſtay-makers, mantua-makers, and hair-dreſſers are better paid than female artiſts of the ſame profeſſions; but ſurely it will never be urged as an apology for this diſproportion, that women are not as capable of making ſtays, gowns, dreſſing hair, and ſimilar arts, as men; if they are not ſuperior to them, it can only be accounted for upon this principle, that the prices

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they receive for their labour are not ſufficient to repay them for the expence of qualifying themſelves for their buſineſs, and that they ſink under the mortification of being regarded as artizans of inferior eſtimation, whilſt the men, who ſupplant them, receive all the encouragement of large profits and full employment, which is enſured to them by the folly of faſhion. The occaſion for this remark is a diſgrace upon thoſe who patronize ſuch a brood of effeminate beings in the garb of men; when ſympathy with their humbler ſiſters ſhould direct them to act in a manner exactly oppoſite, by holding out every incitement to the induſtry of their own ſex. This evil indeed calls loudly upon women of rank and fortune for redreſs: they ſhould

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determine to employ women only, wherever they can be employed; they ſhould procure female inſtructors for their children; they ſhould frequent no ſhops that are not ſerved by women; they ſhould wear no clothes that are not made by them; they ſhould reward them as liberally as they do the men who have hitherto ſupplanted them. Let it be conſidered a common cauſe to give them every poſſible advantage. For once let faſhion be guided by reaſon, and let the mode ſanction a preference to women in every profeſſion, to which their pretenſions are equal with thoſe of the other ſex. This is a patronage which the neceſſitous have a right to expect from the rich and powerful, whether they are poor by birth, or are unfortunately become

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ſo by that mutability of fortune to which every rank is liable.

The inſtruction of youth in all its various departments offers an eligible means of ſupport for thoſe women, who have been qualified for the office by ſuitable acquirements. A perſon who undertakes to ſuperintend the whole of a child or children's education, whether in a private family as governeſs, or as the manager of a public ſeminary, ought to poſſeſs many rare endowments, and ſuch a turn of thinking, and ſtyle of behaviour, as are to be gained only by aſſociation with the beſt company. Thoſe, therefore, who have been placed in the midſt of ſuch ſociety, by their early proſpects, are the only proper candidates for theſe offices. The entire excluſion of men from the

teaching

teaching of girls would provide a new ſpecies of employment for the daughters of tradeſmen, were they to have them completely inſtructed in any one diſtinct branch of knowledge which maſters teach, with a view of ſupplying their places. This would enſure them a reſpectable opportunity of maintaining themſelves, ſhould occaſion require it, at any period of life, and would be a far more valuable gift than a moderate dowry, which, when once conſumed, is irrecoverable, whilſt a talent, that can be reſumed at diſcretion, is like a bank, to which application may always be made.

The acquiſition of polite accompliſhments, unleſs deſigned for a profeſſion, ſhould be confined to perſons of leiſure and ſuperior rank, for they

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unfit others for the duties of their ſtation, by refining their ideas too much for the ſphere in which they are to act, and giving them a taſte for a luxurious life and diſſipated pleaſures, inconſiſtent with the happineſs of themſelves or their connexions. Extenſive knowledge in a particular ſcience, or great practical excellence in one of the fine arts cannot be attained in the uſual courſe of inſtruction at ſchool, therefore ſomething like an apprenticeſhip muſt be undergone: a few years, at leaſt, after ſchool is left, ſhould be devoted to the ſtudy of that art or ſcience, which is choſen for the purpoſe, under the direction of a ſkilful profeſſor:—For example, the art of writing, ſimple as it is, is almoſt wholly taught by men, becauſe women are incapable of teaching

ing it; but no arguments can be convincing, that they do not poſſeſs a capacity of excelling in penmanſhip, if they beſtowed the ſame application upon it, as thoſe men do, who exerciſe the profeſſion of writing-maſters. The ſame obſervations apply with equal force to the other branches of inſtruction, which are at preſent monopolized by maſters; but if women will have a proper ſpirit to aſſume their rights, and induſtry to qualify themſelves for the exerciſe of them, theſe male intruders will be baniſhed from boarding-ſchools and private families, where the pupils are of the female ſex.

Some remarks are neceſſary upon the ſituation of thoſe, who are precluded by the narrow circumſtances of their parents from being appren-

ticed to a trade, or qualified for any other profeſſion than of upper ſervants in genteel families. Temptations on all ſides frequently beſet young women thus circumſtanced. The profligacy of their maſter, or that of his ſons, is ſometimes their ruin; but if they eſcape from the attempts of their ſuperiors, they are expoſed to the ſociety of a number of idle lacqueys, whoſe principles are too commonly vitiated, and their manners corrupted. The neglect of the miſtreſs, in the moral regulations of her houſhold, and the influence of her diſſipated example, frequently increaſe their difficulties in the preſervation of virtuous inclinations and conduct. The indulgence of their manner of living diſqualifies them from becoming uſeful wives to tradeſ-

tradeſmen or artificers, and they have often no other alternative but to remain ſingle, or to ſubmit to marry a footman and keep a public houſe. This is a melancholy view of their condition; but it might doubtleſs be rendered more comfortable by the conſideration of thoſe whom they ſerve, and upon whom it is incumbent to watch with parental ſolicitude over the morals of their ſervants. The taſk is not eaſy, becauſe reformation muſt commence with themſelves: a diminution in the number of uſeleſs men ſervants, who are kept merely for parade, and a determination to retain none, whoſe conduct is diſorderly, or contrary to the precepts of morality, are ſteps neceſſary to the advancement of good order in great families.

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A ſettlement in a married ſtate, is an enjoyment to which ſervants can ſeldom look forward with any proſpect of comfort; and the deſpair of attaining it, is doubtleſs a frequent cauſe of their libertiniſm. A gift or a loan, as the reward of faithful ſervices for a certain number of years, to be employed as a capital in ſome ſmall trade, would be an inducement to ſervants to lay up a little ſtore as a proviſion to enable them to marry. No temporal motive can influence them more powerfully to be moral, ſober, frugal, and attached to one maſter, than the hope of exchanging ſervitude, though at a diſtant day, for an independance, however limited. Though the pleaſure of recompenſing a faithful ſervant, by an eſtabliſhment in buſineſs, can

be enjoyed only by the opulent, yet it is poſſible for thoſe of more contracted poſſeſſions to contribute to this deſign at a ſmaller expence, than that of advancing a capital. There may be ſeveral ways contrived to encourage them to lay by a part of their wages, which is one means of promoting this deſign; many female ſervants, particularly, ſquander all they gain, becauſe they know not what to do with the ſmall ſum they are able to lay by; but if miſtreſſes would condeſcend to take it into their hands, and give them intereſt for it, they would be eaſily perſuaded to put by a ſmall part of their earnings annually. A part of that fund, which charity teaches us to believe is ſpared by all for benevolent purpoſes, may properly be applied in rewarding the fidelity of thoſe ſervants,

vants, who have conducted themſelves well during a ſeries of years. Such an attention to promote their happineſs, would reform that love of change, and want of attachment, of which they are ſo generally accuſed. The moſt effectual precautions, which a young woman can take, whoſe allotment is ſervitude, either to avoid the evils of a bad place, or to ſecure the advantages of a good one, are to make a careful enquiry concerning the moral character of thoſe whoſe ſervice ſhe ſolicits, before ſhe enters into their family; and to arm herſelf againſt the temptation of high wages, and the appearance of a genteel ſituation, by a reſolution to engage with no perſon, upon any terms, unleſs they have an eſtabliſhed reputation for regularity and decorum.

The ſerving of retail ſhops, which deal in articles of female conſumption, ſhould be excluſively appropriated to women. For were the multitudes of men, who are conſtantly employed in meaſuring linen, gauze, ribbons, and lace; ſelling perfumes and coſmetics; ſetting a value on feathers and trinkets; and diſplaying their talents in praiſing the elegance of bonnets and caps, to withdraw, they might benefit the community, by exchanging ſuch frivolous avocations for ſomething more worthy of the maſculine character, and by this meaſure afford an opportunity of gaining a creditable livelihood to many deſtitute women, whom a dreadful neceſſity drives to the buſineſs of proſtitution.—The attendance of women in ſhops, need not be

entirely confined to haberdaſhers, perfumers, and milliners; there are other trades in which they may be employed behind the counter: the familiar offices of trying on gloves and ſhoes, are more ſuitably performed by perſons of the ſame ſex.

It is wonderful, that amongſt the number of modern refinements, an alteration has not been adopted likewiſe, with reſpect to an article of clothing, which cuſtom has long placed in the hands of men, at leaſt in the vicinity of London, the meaſuring and making of which, decency would aſſign to women. The covering alluded to, by this remark, is the laſt which is required. Every undertaker ſhould employ women, for the expreſs purpoſe of ſupplying the female dead, with thoſe things

which are requiſite. How ſhocking is the idea of our perſons being expoſed, even after death, to the obſervation of a parcel of undertaker's men.

Were it eaſier for women to find employment, or were they brought up more capable of earning a maintenance, the good effects of ſuch a practice would not be confined to themſelves alone, but would extend to the whole community, as it would be a powerful means of reducing the number of thoſe miſerable women, who ſupport a precarious exiſtence by the wages of proſtitution, and who, in their turn, become the ſeducers of the inexperienced youth of the other ſex. It would not only operate as a preventative from deviating into the paths of vice, but might

might tend to recover ſome of thoſe who have unfortunately ſtrayed. In the preſent ſtate of things, if a poor frail unthinking girl yields to the ardent ſolicitations of the man who has won her affections, and he be ſo villainous as to abandon her, ſhe is loſt without reſource, eſpecially if ſhe be qualified for no occupation but ſervice; deprived of character, no perſon will take her into their family; the wants of nature muſt be ſatisfied, even at the price which produces utter deſtruction; and the forlorn deſerted one is compelled to betake herſelf to that courſe, which preſently terminates all hope of reſtoration to the eſteem of others, or to her own approbation.

It is ſurely unneceſſary to inſiſt further upon the benefits of encou-

raging the uſeful induſtry of women, they are too obvious to need a repetition.—Beſide thoſe employments which are commonly performed by women, and thoſe already ſhewn to be ſuitable for ſuch perſons as are above the condition of hard labour, there are ſome profeſſions and trades cuſtomarily in the hands of men, which might be conveniently exerciſed by either ſex.—Many parts of the buſineſs of a ſtationer, particularly ruling account books or making pens. The compounding of medicines in an apothecary's ſhop, requires no other talents than care and exactneſs; and if opening a vein occaſionally be an indiſpenſible requiſite, a woman may acquire the capacity of doing it for thoſe of her own ſex at leaſt, without any reaſonable

able objection.—Cupping is an art, which wants neither ſtrength in the performance, nor medical judgment in the application, as that depends upon the direction of the phyſician, and might, under the reſtriction juſt mentioned with regard to bleeding, be exerciſed by women.—Paſtry and confectionary appear particularly conſonant to the habits of women, though generally performed by men: perhaps the heat of the ovens, and the ſtrength requiſite to fill and empty them, may render male aſſiſtants neceſſary; but certainly women are moſt eligible to mix up the ingredients, and prepare the various kinds of cakes for baking.—Light turnery and toy-making, depend more upon dexterity and invention

than

than force, and are therefore ſuitable work for women and children.

There muſt be public houſes for the reception of travellers, and labourers who are ſingle, and have no homes: it were happy indeed for the community, that they were confined to ſuch purpoſes, inſtead of being converted into receptacles for intemperance; but ſince they are neceſſary, even in their preſent corrupt ſtate, ſome perſons muſt ſubmit to the inconveniences of this diſagreeable profeſſion. Without recommending it as an eligible employment for women, reaſons may be urged for the widows of publicans, or even other women of a certain age, engaging in it; as houſes of this deſcription, which are under female manage-

management, are generally the moſt orderly, and the moſt ſucceſsful.

Farming, as far as reſpects the theory, is commenſurate with the powers of the female mind; nor is the practice of inſpecting agricultural proceſſes, incompatible with the delicacy of their frames, if their conſtitution be good. Several inſtances of ſucceſsful female farmers have occurred, and Sir Frederic Morton Eden's opinion confirms the propriety of the practice *. The multiplied

* The following anecdote related in Sir F. M. Eden's ſtate of the poor, exemplifies the idea of its practicability: ——

"That females are not diſqualified from ſtirring in the moſt active and laborious ſpheres of life, the following intereſting ſketch, which was obligingly communicated to me by a friend, ſeems to afford very ſatisfactory evidence.

"Mrs.

tiplied ſources of induſtry in a commercial and manufacturing country, riſen to an extraordinary pitch of

"Mrs. Sarah Spencer was the daughter of a gentleman in Suſſex, her brother having once been high ſheriff of the county. But her family, poſſeſſing only a competent landed eſtate, and being neither engaged, nor in circumſtances to engage, in any lucrative profeſſion, like too many others in this age of univerſal commerce, inſenſibly dwindled to nothing; and though ſhe had been well and genteely educated, and with ſuch views as are common to people in her ſphere of life, yet, on the demiſe of her father, ſhe found her whole fortune did not amount to quite 300*l.* Her ſiſter Mary, a woman of perhaps not inferior goodneſs of heart, though certainly of very inferior abilities, was left in a ſimilar predicament. Their perſons, though not uncomely, were not ſo attractive as to flatter them that, without fortune, they could marry advantageouſly, and a mere clown was not much more likely to be happy with them, than they could have been with him. They either had no relations, on whom they would have been permitted to quarter themſelves,

or

of refinement, like Britain in the preſent day, will doubtleſs afford many other occupations, equally con-

or they thought ſuch a ſtate of dependance but a more ſpecious kind of beggary. *Yet, living in an age and country, in which well educated women, not born to fortunes, are peculiarly forlorn; with no habits of exertion, nor even of a rigid frugality, they ſoon found, that, being thus unable to work, and aſhamed to beg, they had no proſpect but that of pining to death in helpleſs and hopeleſs penury.* It may be queſtioned, perhaps, whether even the moſt reſolute ſpirits have virtue enough to embrace a life of labour, till driven to it by neceſſity; but it is no ordinary effort of virtue, to ſubmit to ſuch a neceſſity with a becoming dignity. This virtue theſe ſiſters poſſeſſed. At a loſs what elſe to do, they took a farm, and, without ceaſing to be gentlewomen, commenced farmers. This farm they carried on for many years, much to their credit and advantage; and, as far as example goes, in an inſtance where example is certainly of moſt effect, not leſs to the advantage of their neighbourhood. To this day the marks of their good huſbandry

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conſiſtent with the female character, as thoſe which have been ſuggeſted, and which will occur to perſons of obſervation, who fix their attention upon the

are to be ſeen in the village of Rottington. How is it to be accounted for, without reflecting upon both the good ſenſe and the virtue of thoſe perſons in the community, whom a real patriot is moſt diſpoſed to reſpect, I mean the yeomanry and the peaſantry of our villages, it might not be eaſy to ſay; but the fact is indiſputable, that thoſe who have been moſt diſtinguiſhed for their endeavours to promote improvements in agriculture, have but rarely been popular characters. This was the hard fate of the Spencers, who, inſtead of gratitude, long experienced little elſe than diſcourteſies and oppoſition in their neighbourhood. The more active of them was called captain Sally, and her ſiſter her man Mary. With the gentry around them, this was not the caſe; by theſe they were viſited and reſpected, as they deſerved to be; and, not ſeldom, in one and the ſame day, have they divided their hours in helping to fill the dung-cart, and receiving company of the higheſt rank and diſtinction. And,

it

the ſubject. May a conſideration of finding redreſs for the helpleſſneſs of female indigence, excite a further enquiry into the moſt attainable means of effecting it.

it was hard to ſay, which of theſe offices they performed with moſt intelligence and grace; for, as has been obſerved of Virgil, they even handled the dung-fork with an air of elegance. To many of their poorer relations, they were not only kind, but uſeful. Towards the cloſe of their lives, which happened 14 or 15 years ago, even the moſt perverſe of their neighbours ſaw their error; and though they continued not to court popularity, they at length became popular; and when they died, they were very ſincerely regretted."

CHAPTER VIII.

Obſervations on the condition of the fourth claſs of Women, ſuggeſting a diſcrimination in diſtributing Charity, and an encouragement of Marriage, as a means for its improvement: With remarks on Schools of Induſtry, and the Houſes of the Poor.

THE manner in which the labouring poor ſhould paſs their time, requires but few obſervations; for their lot dooms them, even in thoſe countries where their ſituation is moſt favourable, to inceſſant toil, as a neceſſary means of ſubſiſtence; but the rigour of the labour of the female poor ſhould be moderated, by the conſideration of their inferiority of ſtrength; and if their condition will admit of improvement, an enquiry into the means moſt likely to effect it properly, belongs to the ſubject of theſe reflections.

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The internal comfort of a cottage, and the virtues of its inhabitants, depend greatly, if not principally, upon the mother of the family. Œconomy, cleanlineſs, induſtry, and, above all theſe, good temper, are the attractions which draw the huſband to his own fire-ſide, after the labour of the day is over; but when the wife is ſlatternly, idle, negligent in providing thoſe ſmall accommodations, that are the effects of good management, it diſcourages him from entruſting her with the diſpoſal of the wages which he has laboriouſly earned, eſpecially if to theſe defects be added the intolerable evil of a ſcolding tongue, he is driven from home to ſeek recreation in company, and is too frequently tempted to expend that pittance in exceſs, which

ſhould be appropriated to the ſupport of the family.

Very different are the appearances of comfort in the houſes of the poor, according to the management of the wife, even where the earnings are equal: in ſome the children are covered with rags, and brought up in the ſtreets to profligacy and ruin; in others, all who are capable of being employed, are buſied in ſomething uſeful, proportioned to their age, and their clothes creditably mended to the utmoſt. There is a pretty great certainty, that in thoſe families where neatneſs and induſtry reign, there is no dram drinking, nor any ſcore run up at the chandler's ſhop; for the true œconomiſt will always be in the habit of paying as ſhe goes, well knowing, that if ſhe

be incapable of diſcharging her debts every week at moſt, it will be impoſſible to releaſe herſelf from the accumulation of months. If her huſband brings home his money regularly, ſhe contrives to amaſs ſuch ſums as ſhall enable her to buy the articles of conſumption in tolerable quantities, not by ounces and pennyworths: a ſyſtem to which the waſteful prodigal is reduced, by ſquandering that ſubſtance in exceſs, or ſuperfluity, which ſhould be reſerved for the neceſſities of the houſhold.

A diſcrimination in charitable donations, according to the viſible effects of good conduct, if generally adopted by the wealthy, would operate as a ſtimulus upon the negligent to amend, and be a means of augmenting the number of comfortable

cottages: but whilſt the bounty of the rich continues to be beſtowed upon thoſe, whoſe appearance is the moſt wretched, without allowing time to enquire whether the cauſe of that exceſſive miſery conſiſts in miſconduct, or unavoidable misfortune; the importunate, the diſſolute, the idle, and the improvident, will gain an advantage over the modeſt, induſtrious, frugal ſufferer, who diſdains to ſolicit compaſſion by the artificial diſtreſs of dirt and rags. The miſery of the poor, like that of other ranks, chiefly originates in their vices; whatever, therefore, conduces to reform their morals, will increaſe their comforts, and improve their condition. Groſs ignorance, and an inſenſibility to the dignity of their nature, induce a mean opinion of themſelves, and

ſtifle that worthy conſciouſneſs, which animates the virtuous in the practice of duty. A juſt ſenſe of religion is the only pure foundation of morality; but to implant that noble principle is a work which tranſcends human ability, we muſt therefore have recourſe to motives within our power; perhaps there are few that have more influence, than a proper eſtimation of character: both the extreme links of ſociety are ſet free by their condition, from the influence of this motive to do well, ſo efficacious upon the middle claſſes of mankind; the elevation of the one raiſes them above the opinion of the world, whilſt the depreſſion of the other ſinks them below it. Could the female poor be awakened to the fear of diſgrace, by the attention and

encouragement of thoſe of their own ſex, to whom they look up with reſpect, it might produce ſuch an alteration in their manners, as might affect thoſe of their huſbands, and gradually accompliſh a general reformation.

Inducements to early marriage, are the moſt powerful agents to reſtrain a licentious intercourſe between the ſexes, one of the prevailing vices among the poor, as the regiſter of every pariſh proves, by the number of unfortunate children, born of parents not united in the matrimonial bond. As a means of promoting marriage, it might be worth the experiment, to beſtow a parochial bounty upon all day labourers, who marry at a ſpecified age, to enable them to purchaſe a few neceſſary articles

ticles of furniture, that they might take poſſeſſion of their humble dwellings free from incumbrance. The diminution in the number of natural children, would probably be a compenſation for the expence of this liberality.

A proſpect of ſubſiſtence, or at leaſt a poſſibility of earning a ſufficiency for the ſupply of ſome comforts, as well as that portion of daily food, which is abſolutely requiſite to the ſupport of life, would encourage the ſober and induſtrious to look forward to the eſtabliſhment of a family. The deſpair of this attainment deters the labourer from marrying, leſt he bring a helpleſs offſpring into the world, for whoſe wants he cannot provide by the utmoſt efforts of his induſtry. The conſe-

quence of celibacy is moſtly a profligate courſe of life, careleſs of the future, and ſatisfied with obtaining a ſupply for the gratification of the preſent hour; a diſpoſition inimical to induſtry, and to that perſeverance in labour, which is neceſſary for amaſſing a depoſit againſt the contingencies of ſickneſs and age.

The eſtabliſhment of ſchools for the education of the infant poor, is an encouragement to matrimony, and one of the moſt certain means of producing a reform in the manners of the lower claſſes, if they are regulated upon principles adapted to this deſign; the children, (girls only are here conſidered) ſhould be inſtructed with plainneſs and ſimplicity in the doctrines of chriſtianity, enforcing by remarks, within the reach

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of their capacity, the moral precepts it enjoins, and illuſtrating them by familiar examples, which come home to their own boſoms, and the circumſtances of their lives. The application of time to ſtudy, and abſtruſe theological doctrines, being entirely unſuitable to this great maſs of the people, the cuſtom of burthening their memories with verbal rituals, containing dogmas above their comprehenſion, and uneſſential to their practice, ſhould be carefully avoided, leſt by diſguſting them with the ſhadow, they ſhould be alienated from the ſubſtance. The perſons who are appointed to the office of miſtreſs in ſuch ſchools, are ſeldom capable of inſtructing the children with clearneſs on theſe important ſubjects, having themſelves, but too often,

often, imperfect and confuſed ideas of them: it is therefore deſirable, that inſpectors of ſuperior information ſhould undertake this taſk, at leaſt they ſhould ſuperintend its execution. The adoption of the ſacred writings as a ſchool-book, is replete with diſadvantages; the gabbling manner in which the Bible is generally run over, whilſt the reſt of the ſcholars are employed in other occupations, deſtroys that reverence for its authority, which ought to be earneſtly impreſſed. With deſign to enforce attention, let a time be ſet apart for reading it, and inſtead of beginning at Geneſis, and proceeding regularly through, it would be much more beneficial to confine the children chiefly to the New Teſtament, the hiſtorical relations of the Pentateuch, the books of Pſalms and Proverbs,

verbs, and ſelected portions of the Prophets, in which are pointed out the deviations of the Jews, and their conſequent puniſhment.—The Pſalms, with a few exceptions, referring to the particular ſituation of David, ſhould not only be read, but may advantageouſly be tranſmitted to memory, as they exhibit an exemplar of devotion, both with reſpect to praiſe and penitence. The books provided for the inſtruction and amuſement of charity-ſchools, ſhould be written for the purpoſe: ſhort leſſons of morality, or concerning the inferior obligations of civil life, in clear language, unembarraſſed with difficult words, and rendered entertaining by the intereſt of ſimple narrative, are beſt adapted to convey the knowledge required by the readers for whom they are deſigned.

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In addition to reading, they ought to be well inſtructed in plain-work, knitting, marking, cutting out, and mending linen, a branch of domeſtic œconomy with which too many are unacquainted, who know how to finiſh a fine ſhirt completely. Waſhing, ironing, and cleaning houſe, ſhould likewiſe be taught them, with every other qualification that will prepare them to become uſeful as ſervants, or as the wives of labourers. They may be allowed to acquire as much ſkill in writing, as will enable them to ſet down the articles of their expenditure, or to write a receipt, which will be of ſmall advantage, unleſs they alſo learn addition of money. The multiplication table is ſo applicable, on various occaſions, that a knowledge of that, and

and the pence table, will profitably repay the time ſpent in learning them.

The miſtreſſes of theſe ſchools ſhould be recommended to ſupport their authority by firmneſs, tempered with mildneſs and affection. In order to diſcharge this important function properly, it ſhould be undertaken, not with a view to gain only, but with a conſcientious deſire of promoting the permanent intereſts of the pupils. It is of conſequence, that a degree of reſpectability ſhould be annexed to the character of thoſe, who ſuperintend the inſtruction of youth, of whatever rank; for the poverty of the ſcholars, cannot derogate from the importance of that office, which conſiſts in modelling the minds of human beings,

who

who are candidates for immortality: though the obſcurity of their birth may diminiſh the influence of their virtues upon ſociety. The cane and the rod are baniſhed, by the refinement of modern manners, from female ſeminaries of a ſuperior order, it is earneſtly to be wiſhed, that they were likewiſe excluded from all others, as the uſe of them ſerves rather to indulge the angry paſſions of the teacher, than to produce reformation in the ſcholar; for where reaſon and kind treatment are ineffectual, blows are never likely to prevail. Severity hardens the heart, and depreſſes a meritorious emulation; it is generally ſubſtituted for a rational method of correction, which requires addreſs and patience, but by its ſucceſs prevents the occaſion

ſion of frequent repetition. Rewards beſtowed upon the deſerving, have a better effect than puniſhments, and if diſtributed impartially will render them almoſt wholly unneceſſary.

The univerſality of Sunday Schools, and Schools of Induſtry, unleſs deſerted by thoſe patrons who ſo warmly eſpouſed them on their firſt eſtabliſhment, are likely to produce a viſible alteration in the manners of the peaſantry; but their full effect can ſcarcely be felt, till another generation paſs away, and a new race of parents ariſe, more civilized than their predeceſſors.

Some employments are particularly inimical to the morals of the female poor, among which may be included, field labour of every kind, where women are obliged to mix indiſ-

diſcriminately with men of good and bad character; many of whom have often no reputation at ſtake in the neighbourhood, being ſtrangers, who have travelled from diſtant parts for the purpoſe of finding work during a particular ſeaſon. Men and boys are therefore beſt ſuited to gather in the produce of the earth, unleſs a ſcarcity of hands compel the other ſex to aſſiſt them: when this neceſſity occurs, women ſhould work in company with their huſbands, and girls under the watchful eye of their parents, that they may be protected from the licentious converſation and looſe manners of the unprincipled, who trifle with innocence, and inconſiderately deſtroy the virtue and peace of thoſe, who unhappily fall in their way.

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Manufactories where both ſexes are promiſcuouſly aſſembled, and employed together, are perhaps ſtill more unfavourable to habits of virtue. Wherever it is practicable, there ſhould be ſeparate apartments allotted to men and women, where each may work without communication with the other. Thoſe employments which can be carried on ſeparately at their own houſes, poſſeſs advantages far beyond all others; as they promote domeſtic affection, and ſocial comfort; and have a tendency to preſerve the youth, eſpecially, from the contagion of ill example; whilſt they afford opportunities to the mother of the family, to give ſome attention to the younger children, and the order of her houſhold affairs.

The conſtruction of the houſes of the poor, affects not only their enjoyment, but has a material influence upon their civilization. The different ſexes occupying the ſame apartment, is an evil that deſtroys that modeſty, and purity of manners, which conſtitutes the beſt guard to female chaſtity; this inconvenience prevails moſt in cities and large towns, where many indigent families are cooped up in one houſe, in obſcure corners, concealed from the obſervation of thoſe, to whom they look up with reſpect, on account of their ſuperior rank. The health of body, and purity of mind, of a vaſt number of perſons, are corrupted by this multitudinous aſſemblage, whoſe happineſs would be increaſed, and uſefulneſs to the community facilitated

tated by diviſion; but the daily attention that is now given by thoſe, who are diſtinguiſhed for eminent abilities, to the improvement of the condition of that large portion of mankind, who are compelled to manual labour for ſupport, will gradually remove thoſe obſtacles that have hitherto impeded their progreſs in morals and civilization.

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